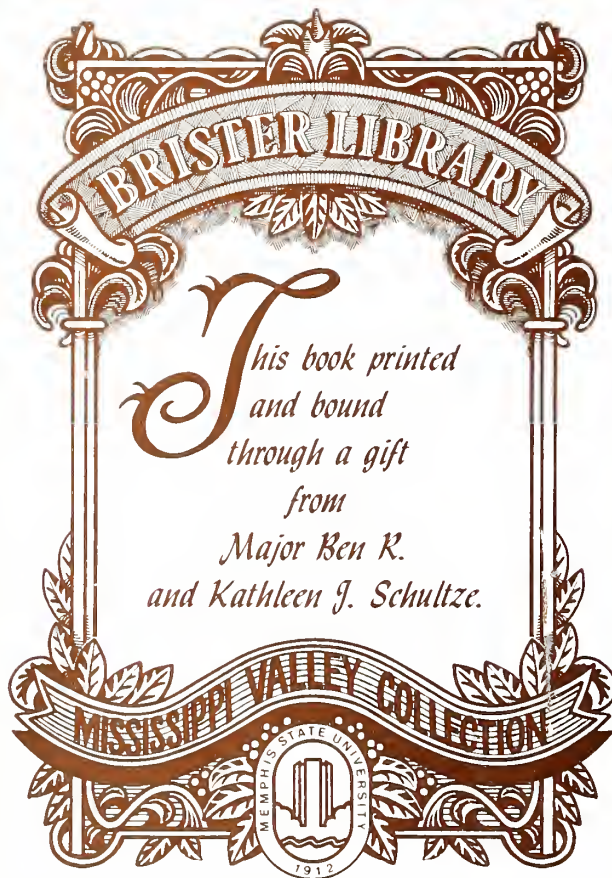


RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY
INTERVIEWS WITH
BRAINARD CHENEY

BY CHARLES W. CRAWFORD
TRANSCRIBER - BETTY WILLIAMS
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RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWS WITH BRAINARD CHENEY

FEBRUARY 18, 1981

JUNE 27, 1981

NOVEMBER 7, 1981

DECEMBER 12, 1981

BY CHARLES W. CRAWFORD

TRANSCRIBED - BETTY WILLIAMS

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PLACE Smyrna, Tennessee

DATE June 27, 1981.

Charles W. Crawford
(INTERVIEWEE)

24 Nov 81
Dr. Crawford has
retracted this
interview for
15 years
negative. Smith
OK. Quater, MUC

Charles W. Crawford

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THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY.
THIS PROJECT IS "RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY". THE DATE IS
FEBRUARY 18, 1981. THE PLACE IS SMYRNA, TENNESSEE. THE INTERVIEW
IS WITH MR. BRAINARD CHENEY. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W.
CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE.
TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS. THIS IS INTERVIEW #1

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Cheney, do you mind if I get a little
biographical background information about
you, for example, where and when were you born and where you grew up and
went to school?


MR. CHENEY: Yes, I was born in the town Fitzgerald,
Georgia where my father was an attorney.
We moved when I was five years old to Lumber City, Georgia, a small
village near which my father had the family farm. He actually went there
to develop properties that didn't successfully develop--clay deposits,
timber and I don't know what else. Anyhow his plans fell through and he
took ill and died within three years in 1908.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year were you born, Mr. Cheney?

MR. CHENEY: I was born in 1900.

DR. CRAWFORD: That's easy to keep up with.

MR. CHENEY: The turn of the century, June 3rd, the
same date as the president of the Confederacy,
Jeff Davis, same day of the month. We continued to live there. My
mother and my two sisters, one younger and one older until we were grown.
There was a farm--three small farms--tenant farm we had some seven miles



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out in the forks of the river that being the Ocmulgee and Oconee.

The Oconee and the Ocmulgee run together to form the Altamaha. The Cheney property was out there in the forks of the river in a community called Old Sodom which was a name taken on from a Primitive Baptist Church.

DR. CRAWFORD: How do you spell that?

MR. CHENEY: Well, I never saw it in print, but it was biblical--the name of Sodom.

DR. CRAWFORD: S-O-D-O-M?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, S-O-D-O-M, I guess. It was called Old Sodom. It took the name from a Primitive Baptist Church.

DR. CRAWFORD: And your farm was in the river valley there?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. It was right in there. We never lived out there. We lived in the little village which was a saw-mill village properly named Lumber City, I suppose. My mother was kind of exiled there. She came from Charleston and Lumber City was pretty raw for her.

DR. CRAWFORD: That would be quite a change for her.

MR. CHENEY: Of course she lived in Georgia then twenty years. She wasn't very happy with living in Lumber City, but it didn't seem that we could move. We didn't move. World War I came along and I guess I was sixteen or seventeen by the time we had come into the war, I guess.

DR. CRAWFORD: Entered the war in April.

MR. CHENEY: April--yes. My mother was a little bit uneasy that I might volunteer so I was

undersize and don't know whether I could have made it. Anyway, she sent me to the "Citadel" in Charleston where I remained during the war years, but got close enough to feel disappointed. I had gone to summer training and was under orders to go to Princeton to a ground school for the air force which I was greatly engaged in the idea and felt very disappointed that the war ended before my getting into it. I was not in my element at a military school.

DR. CRAWFORD: Had you gone to school at Lumber City at first?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I had gone to what was called the Lumber City High School which was a ten-year high school and a school.

DR. CRAWFORD: And what military academy did you attend?

MR. CHENEY: Well, it was college and I had difficulty getting, into it. I had to have some coaching. It was called "The Citadel" in Charleston.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes uh-huh.

MR. CHENEY: It's a famous military college.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes it certainly is.

MR. CHENEY: (Like) VMI. I had one hell of a time. I wasn't cut out to be a soldier and I was in the awkward squad and under arrest most of my first semester in the fall. Finally, I got into the order of things and I did win my chevrons the next year. But the Armistice was signed November 11 and I dropped all interest in military life after that and belonged to something called bum squad which was an informal supposed organization to get out of all the

military work you could, you know. And got kicked out the last day of school my sophomore year by going over the limit of demerits only about two hours before we were to be dismissed for the day. (Laughter).

Then I got in an argument with my mother about where I should go to school. I'd always planned to come to Vanderbilt and in the interim Vanderbilt had left the Methodist Church. My mother was a very strong Methodist and she didn't want me to come up here. She wanted me to go to Emory in Georgia. I don't know why--I had never been on the campus of either place and didn't know anybody at either school, but I wouldn't go so I went to the bank and got E.X. to tell her and came up here the next year and stayed only one term.

DR. CRAWFORD: That would have been about 1920.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah that would have been '20. And at that time particularly in the south, there was an acute farm depression and I had a new brother-in-law (my older sister had married) who I admired, and he and his father had a lumber company in the town of Eastman and they had a big corks site contract with the Pennsylvania Railroad. This was about the only going business in the neighborhood. He told me I had better come down and get to work to try to save the place from being sold for the mortgage. We had timberland and I went down and operated the cross-tie camp for that year up until fall when the market collapsed and I got a job teaching school.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where did you teach, Mr. Cheney?

MR. CHENEY: It was called then a Consolidated Country School in a settlement called Jonesville,

Georgia, It was right over on the Alabama line. I taught there one year and I switched schools to a town called Scotlandware. Then I taught a third year at another small village named Boston. In the meantime I required enough savings to come back to Vanderbilt. In which I did in '24 or 25. When I finished my junior year at Vanderbilt, my mother died that year and I had some debts and it didn't seem compelling the reasons for going one and try to get...I didn't think I could finance it and I had a job at that time with an investment banking house, Caldwell and Company in Nashville. They put me in the Finance Department or something like that which I didn't want to be in and I incurred and they fired me. The V. Pres. thought I wasn't suited for it, and I agreed with them. It wasn't anything I knew about or wanted to do so I indulged myself in what I really wanted to do and I went on a newspaper. I didn't think I could afford it because well the Tennessean offered me a job at \$50.00 a month and I accepted it but before I went to work for them the Banner it so happened--Jimmy Stahlman offered me \$17.50 a week which was about \$65.00 a month. (Laughter).

DR. CRAWFORD: What year was that, Sir?

MR. CHENEY: It would have been '25--the late summer of '25.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Stahlman was owner of the Banner that year?

MR. CHENEY: He was at that time. The old major's grandfather was still alive, Jimmy was the executive director and he was in effect the manager and publisher and later be-

came the owner.

DR. CRAWFORD: You started as a reporter.

MR. CHENEY: Yes. It so happened in about a month at coming on the paper then the police reporter went on to higher things and become an assistant Attorney General. He'd taken part in a campaign for the District Attorney General and so I inherited his beat, his run as police reporter which I continued to serve until the editor decided I had been there too long. I enjoyed it very much. I had a great deal of fun on the police run.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, that was good experience, wasn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, well it was a great game with me, you know Prohibition was on then and a police reporter had special privileges among speak-easies-- I mean, you got a lot of free drinks. (Laughter) I enjoyed all that and all the underworld--getting into the underworld and being recognized at speak-easies and gambling joints and so forth.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was the underworld then in Nashville mainly concerned with liquor?

MR. CHENEY: Mostly the liquor traffic, but it was joined by gambling which was also illicit and....

DR. CRAWFORD: I know that was true in Memphis, then. How long did you serve as police reporter?

MR. CHENEY: I think it was three years or there about and finally the city editor said, "You're having too good a time down there and you need to go with your (career)."

So he took me on to city and county politics and I suppose I shifted over to the state about two years later. I was in politics till I left the paper. I guess the last three or four or maybe five years I was under Jimmy (Stahlman) directly.

DR. CRAWFORD: You mean the political coverage?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, and I took orders from him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where were the speak-easies located then?
Mostly outside the city limits?

MR. CHENEY: No, let's see, there was one right behind
the BANNER called Uncle Billies'.

All you had to do was go down the alley between the Banner building and the next building. The Banner fronted on Third Avenue and this eating joint (supposed to be) on Second operated by Uncle Billy who sold half pints in medicine bottles. (Laughter).

DR. CRAWFORD: How open did he operate?

MR. CHENEY: Well, they'd serve their own clientele
and they would serve you drinks at the table,
a so-called mixed drink--it was a little coca cola and it was fair rock-gut moonshine.

DR. CRAWFORD: Usually locally made?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, we counted Uncle Billy as a better class
of what you ran into then. And we used to
(the newspapermen) gather there. We used to go down there. You couldn't stop till you put the paper to bed. We went to press about 2:15 and your attention always grows on a newspaper up till press time and afterward there's a ...and you're done and you relax and we used to go down there

and have two, three drinks. We'd get down there anywhere from around 3 o'clock.

DR. CRAWFORD: When you got the paper to bed.

MR. CHENEY: There were two other speak-easies on that street around public square.

DR. CRAWFORD: What were they called?

MR. CHENEY: They were mostly conducted under the guise of eating places. And you had to (I can't think of the name now).

DR. CRAWFORD: Did they have a back room then?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. Back room. I know what now a famous operation by automobile that two brothers, Jimmy and Johnny Kelly that later John Kelly operated a spot--a eating house still out in West End.

DR. CRAWFORD: I had dinner there a few nights ago. That goes back to the Twenties or Thirties?

MR. CHENEY: Twenties or the late twenties. They were youngsters and they operated automobile deliveries. I mean they didn't have a spot. You called them by telephone and they had a telephone service. Later they had a downtown place--a speak-easy.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was Jimmy and Johnny Kelly?

MR. CHENEY: Jimmy and Johnny Kelly. Johnny is dead, but Jimmy is still carrying on I think.

I had a bad automobile accident in '27. At that time Ralph McGill, later a publisher of the Atlanta Constitution, was sports editor of the Banner and

he and I lived together on Westside Road on the Vanderbilt Campus at that time. Vanderbilt had a rather limited student body and they didn't fill up all their dormitory accommodations and they were lenient about letting alumni to (continue to live there). He and I lived in two unconnected rooms on what was called Westside Road. I was out by myself and was quite intoxicated. I was coming back to work at midnight from a social event. Frankly I was pretty drunk. I was in what you call a big hub you-drive-it, and it was an intensely foggy night and there was an offset in the street and no light on the corner and I dropped down there and literally didn't see the tree until I was on it and I was thrown through the windshield, I am told, and picked up off the hood and with compound fractures and carried by the city ambulance to the city hospital. And only recognized by one of the interns whom I had known at Vanderbilt. I was there for about two months before I got back to the job.

DR. CRAWFORD:

That was Ralph McGill, wasn't it?

MR. CHENEY:

Yes. Well, as a matter of fact I didn't come to for three days I believe. The hospital caught on fire during my first night there and Jimmy and McGill and couple of reporters that Jimmy detailed or called on came to the hospital and rolled my bed out really (Laughter) to take me out of the hospital until the fire got under control. All of which I didn't know anything about at the time--I was told later. Anyhow what was brought me this arm was McGill and I enjoyed a bootlegger at the time that was named Bull Giddings, spelled G-I-D-D-I-N-G-S, I guess. Anyhow we had an arrangement with Bull, we bought on the credit and he would deliver the goods to our flat up there and put it in the bureau drawer where was good to set it. And I got

knocked out and I had all the debts I could carry including (I've forgotten what it was) \$25.00 I owed Bull Giddings. And I had a heck of a time paying off my debts while I was in the hospital. I came out of the hospital owing the city \$1100. The only creditor that gave me any favors was Bull Giddings and he wrote off my debts. He came to see me in the hospital bringing a fruit jar of eggnogg (Laughter) Saying, "I know you are hard up, just forget mine."

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, that's a friend!

MR. CHENEY: Yep!

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, how did the bootleggers operate? They paid for protection, I suppose?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, Well, yes or no. I was able to do Bull a favor and he knew it of course, I remember once--I never participated in this--Criminal Court Judge, I used to frequently sit beside him in the court room and we had a pretty and informal relationship and there was a docket in there and somebody named Chaney and he said, "Is this any kin of yours and do we need to do anything about this?" I said, "No, he is no kin of mine." He was half serious about it, but getting out of liquor charges was not impossible thing at all.

DR. CRAWFORD: Not impossible in Memphis either.

MR. CHENEY: Friends at court were important. Of course that changed all in the 30's.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh huh. After the repeal. It was a very colorful period. I know that in Memphis and in Nashville too.

MR. CHENEY: McGill had a sports column, but he was very flexible. He wrote about anything that occurred to him at the time dubbed Fifth Avenue where they had two under cover gambling houses upstairs that had a restaurant that operated with a taxi madam. Taxies gathered and you could pick them up and they all handled liquor and the restaurant handled it. And they had a couple of shoot-outs there and McGill dubbed it "western front" politics of the day. All that cleared out after the prohibition passed.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, that changed the situation.

MR. CHENEY: I know there were underworld characters. There was a man named Harry (the last name had left me). He was called the "king of the underworld" in the liquor traffic. A couple were Jewish--there was a man who financed it too who lived out near Belle Meade.

DR. CRAWFORD: They were local people?

MR. CHENEY: They were local people, yeah.

DR. CRAWFORD: I know in Memphis there was no connection with anything national as far as I knew.

MR. CHENEY: No, it was all local here. There was no {Harry} mafia, but he had a little office out there north of Nashville.

DR. CRAWFORD: And it was financed locally?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. Also there was a red light district here when I came on. There were a half a dozen or more whore houses operating.

DR. CRAWFORD: Are they in a certain part of town?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. All of them were behind the Capitol.

MR. CHENEY: (CONT.) That was what the district was known as.

DR. CRAWFORD: North of the Capitol?

MR. CHENEY: North. Gay Street and Johnson in between
about Eighth Avenue and Fourth.

DR. CRAWFORD: Down the hill?

MR. CHENEY: Uh huh yes. They were all--one house, I
believe, in south Nashville maybe more but
I don't know. Most of them were bunched up behind the Capitol. They had
police protection of a sort.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suppose that district was not unknown to
the state legislators?

MR. CHENEY: Oh no. In fact it was very convenient for
them. As a matter of fact, I believe there
was a story about (it was before my day) the mayor in trapping the Governor
in a house down there.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was former Governor Malcolm Patterson.
How did that happen according to the story?

MR. CHENEY: It was supposed to have been a set-up.
Patterson was--he was drinking down there
and I don't really have command of the details. It was before my day.

DR. CRAWFORD: It would have been about 1914 or '15.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. The mayor caught him there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was the mayor then?

MR. CHENEY: I think it was Hillory House then. House
was mayor for about twenty-five years through-
out the time that I was on the paper.

DR. CRAWFORD: The reporters happened to be there, didn't they?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, it was a set-up with the reporters and I never knew any man who was there. I don't know--Earl Shaw may have been, probably was, but I never did talk to Earl about it.

DR. CRAWFORD: He's not living now, is he?

MR. CHENEY: No, he's dead. I believe he was managing editor of the Tennessean back then. Who incidentally (covered) the largest railroad wreck in this country (which) occurred--it was a troop train during World War I--about 1916.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did that get much coverage in the press?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, very considerable. It just happened it came to mind. I just happened to be looking at some account of the accident and it was cited in something I saw the other day--there were more deaths or injuries than any other wreck in the history of the country. Earl Shaw had told me about that. He was running the afternoon paper and they held their presses until--this occurred about that time in the afternoon-----about press time.

They held the business of covering it. That was before my day.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year did you start your political coverage?

MR. CHENEY: I covered my first campaigns and gubernatorial campaigns in 1930.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you start about 1928?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah.

DR. CRAWFORD: There would have been a campaign that year,

DR. CRAWFORD: (CONT.)

but you did not cover it?

MR. CHENEY:

I did a little supplemental work--I was not chief political reporter. They had a man named Ralph Perry. I was Perry's understudy. I did little bit to help out. I covered the gubernatorial race in '30. I was up on the Hill in '29 as a fill-in some, but from '30 on that was my assignment--I covered the Capitol.

DR. CRAWFORD:

I guess Ralph Perry is gone now, isn't he?

MR. CHENEY:

Yes. Old Ralph has been dead some years. He left the Banner as political writer to be secretary to Hill McAllister when he was governor. After Hill McAllister's term of office Perry went on to the Tennessean and wrote politics for awhile. I think he retired.

DR. CRAWFORD:

Incidentally I have interviewed Jim Cummings, who was on the Legislature about this period so I have had some pretty good accounts of it. But what do you remember about Legislature when you started covering it in '28 and '29, Mr. Cheney?

MR. CHENEY:

Henry Horton was Governor the first time I was on the Hill. What was known as the Lea-Caldwell Machine was in control.

DR. CRAWFORD:

That was Colonel Luke Lea.

MR. CHENEY:

Colonel Luke Lea and Roger Caldwell and that creature in the Governor's chair was Henry Horton. They were under pretty sharp attack from the "outs". I covered the Senate I believe, in '29 Anyhow Hugh Anderson was in the Senate.

DR. CRAWFORD:

What was Hugh Anderson's position?

MR. CHENEY: He was in the Senate I believe.

This had to be '31 because it went on into--
the big bull market collapsed in fall of '29.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes sir. October.

MR. CHENEY: October of '29. Caldwell and Company and
Brainard of Louisville. They were both sort
of reeling and went together perhaps to support each other. Neither one
Caldwell and Company--let's see there was the Governor's race--that
would have been in '30.

DR. CRAWFORD: And they supported Henry Horton?

MR. CHENEY: And they supported Henry Horton again and
got him in. I covered first Estes Gwin,
L. E. Gwin as a candidate for the Democratic nomination which he failed
and then a Democratic candidate named Arthur Bruce, who was one of the
Memphis family, the Hardwood Lumber Company.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was Bruce's name?

MR. CHENEY: Arthur. Arthur had been a vice president
I believe at Bruce. Anyhow he was their
research man. He was a Harvard man and had a hard mid-western accent.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was the campaign of '30?

MR. CHENEY: Campaign of '30. He lost very badly and the
day after the election Caldwell and Company
folded.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now who was the other Democratic candidate,
Estes Gwin?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. G-W-I-N. Only one "N" I believe.

He was the most unprepossessing mortal I ever saw. Unprepossessing--looking poor fellow--his profile--just cross eyes. He was bright and he was cadaverous looking man little man, but a good stump speaker. I guess part of his technique was when he got up there he looked like a scarecrow and he couldn't think if he had good sense and he astonished them what came forth. He had a very good speaking voice.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did Henry Horton win again that time?

MR. CHENEY: Well, they owned the high rolling machine and this exists off the record--there is no form of evidence by which you could prove it, but it is believed and I believe and I am quite sure that Luke Lea put Gwin in the race.

DR. CRAWFORD: Because he would be a weak candidate?

MR. CHENEY: No, because definite condition that he would withdraw after the qualification deadline.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he withdraw?

MR. CHENEY: He didn't withdraw and for a good reason.

I have this word of mouth. There was an old top sergeant sort of political campaign manager named Lonnie Orms. Orms was rough, tough and a damn good political manager.

DR. CRAWFORD: How do you spell his name, sir?

MR. CHENEY: O-R-M-E-S. And he told me that on a hunch and he had seen two or three things of Gwin's behavior and he got real suspicious. At that time there was a man named Bill Overall and he came from this county and he lived up on this Overall Creek. Anyhow Bill was Luke Lea's bag man and had a room in

Andrew Jackson Hotel. Ormes had headquarters down in the old Maxwell House and they were about to close us out for lack of money.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was the Gwin campaign headquarters?

MR. CHENEY: Gwin campaign headquarters. And under a hunch Lonnie told me he walked up to where the Andrew Jackson and the Hermitage were and that was Victory Square, and saw Gwin go in the Andrew Jackson Hotel. Gwin was supposed to be out on the campaign trail some 1000 miles away. He followed him and got on the elevator behind him and he got off and of course he knew where Overall's room was. And he spies Gwin in there passing money, I mean Overall was paying him off. And backed him up against the wall and said, "You little knot-headed son of b---- if you try to double cross me this state won't be big enough for the two of us. Now get the hell out of here and get on the campaign trail and do it." And he gave old Horton a pretty hard run for his money.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was Lonnie Ormes working for?

MR. CHENEY: He was again one of the "outs".

DR. CRAWFORD: He was against Henry Horton?

MR. CHENEY: Henry Horton and them. And of course, the Banner was sympathetic. And The House machine was on our side at that time, but Memphis went with the Lea-Caldwell crowd.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know why Mr. Crump did?

MR. CHENEY: Well, they thought Gwin stank, and they were right. They didn't think he was reliable and he was anti-the Crump machine down there. They wouldn't go

with him. Moreover I think Hill McAllister had made two unsuccessful attempts and they had gotten a little sick of it.

DR. CRAWFORD: How important was Mr. Crump at this time of 1930?

MR. CHENEY: Well, he was riding high after the Caldwell Debacle he came into a long period where a man couldn't be elected governor in this state without his approval and continued to dominate it until Estes Kefauver beat him down there in '48.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Crump supported Horton in 1930?

MR. CHENEY: Yep he did. Of course, the debacle occurred in '31 you see. The Legislature sought to impeach (Horton) and would have if they had behaved themselves properly. That was poorly conducted.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you think the failure of Caldwell Company was sort of prevented until after the election? Had it started before?

MR. CHENEY: Sure, they handled it up until after the election.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now let's see. Colonel Lea spent some time in prison--what happened to Mr. Caldwell?

MR. CHENEY: They wouldn't convict him. Lea had a hell of more enemies than Rogers did.

DR. CRAWFORD: Than Rogers Caldwell did?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. I'll tell you this--Scripps-Howard correspondent in Nashville was a boy named Benton Stone. I don't know if Ben is still alive or not. I renewed my acquaintance with him when I was in Washington during the war. He was up

there. Benton got a tip that Rogers was going out to see Paul Davis who was President of the American National Bank. The Fourth and the First which was Roger's father's bank--old man Jimmy--they were already virtually in a state of collapse. Anyhow Rogers was going out to get Paul to help. We went out there--Davis's house--and hid in the hedge outside the living room and watched. You could just see it. It was very clear, but we couldn't get a story published on it, but he was asking for mercy and help then and that was just two days or four days or the week of the election. And the collapse occurred the day after. They just held up until the election that was all.

DR. CRAWFORD: So as not to affect it. It might have changed it.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, it might have changed it. We tried our best over Arthur who was too responsible a businessman. We told him to "Charge it!" "It'll break em, you know." You see the State of Tennessee had about seven million dollars on deposit in this flimsy little pretense of a little commercial bank that was not a damn thing but a set of books to accommodate to take on this state money. And they couldn't pay a dime of it back.

DR. CRAWFORD: Tennessee lost seven million or so, didn't they?

MR. CHENEY: Yes and we wanted him to expose it, but he wouldn't do it. It might have broken a hell of a lot of other people. It made it very scary at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: What brought Caldwell and Lea together?

MR. CHENEY: Caldwell was financing some public works and I don't really know. There was a story about their meeting and I never heard it given forth, but they had some common interests there and I suppose it was in order to get state money on deposit. Anyhow Caldwell was also interested in promoting prosperity of the district there was a river road program that was of considerable interest--market roads and so forth. They didn't finance it, but they were interested in promoting it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did they have an interest in the Ky-rock they were using in Tennessee?

MR. CHENEY: Right. They were interested in Ky-rock. Quite right.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that supplied by a Lea or Caldwell business?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Both of them were interested and I think Lea was interested in Ky-rock. I know the Caldwell Company was. There is a University of North Carolina publication that came out several years ago based upon the legislative hearings that occurred and was in detail and pretty factual. I once had a copy, but I haven't seen it in a year.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did the Lea-Caldwell machine get along with Austin Peay? What was their relationship?

MR. CHENEY: Well, Peay was a very practical man--a man of practical political honesty and responsibility and he knew Luke only too well. And he watched him like a hawk. Luke was his main support in Middle Tennessee. Bill Hoffman of the Banner,

now dead some years, was covering the Capitol under Peay and Bill told me that Peay watched Luke as close as he would a hawk and Luke would come to Peay with a proposition of some sort and Peay would say, "Luke, I wish I knew what was in your mind about this. I am very opposed to doing this and so on". Luke couldn't get away with a lot. Of course, he had a free hand after Peay died and Henry Horton succeeded to power. Old man Horton felt his inadequacy and depended on Lea and Caldwell explicitly.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, what was the difference then mainly in Governor Peay and Governor Horton?

MR. CHENEY: I would have to check this, but I think that the deposits--state deposits--were moved over to the Bank of Tennessee under Horton. I don't think Peay allowed this. I wouldn't trust my memory on this, but the Bank of Tennessee, I happen to know this, wasn't anything but a set of books. In my unhappy days with Caldwell and Company I was assigned to keep those books and I worked downstairs for Caldwell and Company. Of course, I was on Caldwell and Company payroll. But I came upstairs balanced the books every so often and the only accounts there were state accounts. They were set up primarily to get those state deposits. Now I think, you'll have to check it, came on entirely under Horton. I do know that Peay was very leary over Luke and didn't let him get away with a lot. But he depended upon him. Of course, his paper was here in Middle Tennessee and very powerful and very important.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, would you consider Peay as stronger than Horton?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, very much so. I do know this that Peay approached Major Stahlman through channels--

through Bill Hoffman--I believe, feeling him out to see if he could shift from Luke over. He said, "I just can't live with Luke." But the Major wouldn't do it. Major was an Indian fighter and he was...and that is legend, I mean, word of mouth. I do know that the whole atmosphere changed up there after Henry came in.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, apparently it took a strong person to watch Luke Lea.

MR. CHENEY: Yes. He was imaginative and devious and had all the brass in the world. He would do anything that you would let him get by with.

DR. CRAWFORD: What newspapers did Lea control then?

MR. CHENEY: Well, that was a part of their alliance. I'm glad you reminded me of that. Originally, Lea was publisher of the Tennessean, afternoon, evening and morning paper. But Lea and Caldwell formed a corporate alliance and bought the Knoxville Journal, a Republican paper and turned it into a Democratic paper, and then bought the Commercial Appeal and had a deal on for the Atlanta Constitution that fell through.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was a big operation, wasn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah they were operating in a big way. That was just before the collapse of things.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, sometimes these empires grow up like mushrooms in Tennessee. What were the main public issues between Horton and Bruce in the campaign of 1930?

MR. CHENEY: Well, there were--it was a peculiar campaign in a way. There were accusations of--

they used to call them--weed choppers and tar dabbers--WPA putting these men to work in the campaign on highways. Then there were charges of building highways and profiteering of political henchmen. There were that kind (of thing) going on and the extravagance of Lea-Caldwell-Horton machine was attacked. They didn't get into--neither Gwin nor Bruce made a direct attack. The set-up wasn't really known, I suppose. In other words, neither one of them charged that the State of Tennessee had seven million dollars on deposit in a phoney bank.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you think that they knew that and just didn't bring it up?

MR. CHENEY: Well, it existed as a rumor. They didn't have (proof).

DR. CRAWFORD: What was Jimmy Stahlman's position in this race?

MR. CHENEY: Well, he was very anti-Luke Lea and he was anti-machine. As a matter of fact they put me on the road. The Nashville governor-makers didn't know Gwin or anything about him. They were a little leary of him, but Lonnie Ormes said, "Anybody who is against the Lea-Caldwell-Horton crowd, I am for." So he came in and when Gwin first announced he had an old man named George Pulley who was sort of ex-political manager Carmack, who was a kinsman of Edward Ward.

DR. CRAWFORD: Edward Ward?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. But they didn't have much prestige as political managers and then Ormes came on into the management of the Gwin campaign. Ormes had just managed, I think, Hill McAlister's unsuccessful campaign and the Banner and suddenly the Times came

in. The Chattanooga Times assigned a man, Old Stockard, a boy what was his name, Stockard had covered the Patterson-Carmack debate as an old man which he gave me an oral account of during when we rode together in a car that carried the candidate. We were both the Chattanooga Times and the Banner were taken in and forwarded this Gwin on the assumption that he was a valid candidate. I may say he made a hard race.

DR. CRAWFORD: Once he decided to stay in. How was the campaigning done in 1930? By automobile?

MR. CHENEY: By automobile.

DR. CRAWFORD: Occasionally. I guess I was on a train trip maybe twice to get to one end of the state to another. Yes, with automobiles. As a matter of fact most of that Gwin campaign he had a car and a driver and Stockard and I rode with him in the back of the car.

DR. CRAWFORD: Let's see, what was his name, sir?

MR. CHENEY: The candidate?

DR. CRAWFORD: No. The reporter for the Chattanooga Times?

MR. CHENEY: His last name was Stockard. Was it Sam Stockard? I believe.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know if he would still be living?

MR. CHENEY: I am sure he isn't because he was a man ten years older than me and I lost track of him after that. I think he went on Times payroll just for that race. I believe he had a brother who lives somewhere here in this neighborhood who was in the construction business. They've disappeared twenty to twenty-five years ago or longer than that.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was the background of Lonnie Ormes?

He seems to be a very good manager.

MR. CHENEY: He was. He managed two or three of McKellar's campaigns and Hill McAlister and he managed the one I say. Ormes held political office after McAlister came in from '33. I believe Ormes was in the Comptroller's office as chief clerk and later he was over there in some of the federal offices. McKellar got him a job. He lived over in Williamson County.

DR. CRAWFORD: In what county?

MR. CHENEY: Williamson near Franklin. He had a farm near there. I think he incurred old man Crump's disfavor in his last year. Some movements to that effect, I don't know.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, many people did, you know.

MR. CHENEY: Well, he had been very much a part of the Crump machine a number of years.

DR. CRAWFORD: Lonnie Ormes had?

MR. CHENEY: Uh huh.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Crump fell out with a number of people as time went on.

MR. CHENEY: He and Jimmy never fell out though. We were put in an embarrassing position when Crump and McKellar, it never quite reached the public surface, when Crump put McKellar down in the race for the governor's seat that involved Gordon Browning. You see he switched to Gordon Browning late in that race. McKellar had come out for Burgin Dossett and he never did come out publicly in supporting Burgin. Burgin was a logical candidate for our crowd.

He was part of the faction and we were supporting him of course--the Banner was. I remember when McKellar came down there after Crump came out for Browning and consulted me--wanted me to tell him it would serve no useful purpose that he should come out for Dossett at that time and I agreed with him. The damn thing to do about it was to call the election--and that was an election that was called two weeks before the voting. Nobody in the state had any doubt who (would be elected).

DR. CRAWFORD: Now what did Mr. Crump tell you sir?

MR. CHENEY: Crump didn't tell me anything, but McKellar told me. He asked me if I thought it would serve any useful purpose for him to come out publicly in the newspaper in support of Burgin Dossett at that point. I said, "No." I agreed with him that it couldn't serve so he didn't make the statement.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were you convinced that Burgin Dossett could not win?

MR. CHENEY: No, absolutely.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did you believe that?

MR. CHENEY: It was a very remarkable situation. Hatcher, Tennessean reporter, who had a lot of prestige as a political reporter had been writing about it and saying he finally worked up to the point of speculating on Crump. Crump hadn't made up his mind and finally he said, "Whoever Crump puts his hand on will be the next Governor." The campaign had just reached that psychological point where that found agreement with all the voices and other newspapers took it up from Joe (Hatcher) and this went on two weeks before the election and when Crump put his hand on Browning that called the election. Browning carried

the whole state and seems like a two to one (margin). The governor's contest in this state was hard fought back then. And it was almost like two parties and all those factors. Browning went in. I remember his telegram to the Crump machine--"Seventy thousand reasons why I love Memphis." That was his vote from down there.

DR. CRAWFORD: What position did Mr. Stahlman take in that campaign?

MR. CHENEY: He stuck to Burgin Dossett. We were for him. He knew that we were beat. Jimmy was never -- he took a side and that was it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Is that what you mean when you say he was an Indian fighter?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. He never got over his prejudices.

DR. CRAWFORD: What were Burgin Dossett's qualifications?

MR. CHENEY: I think he was well qualified. He had been Commissioner of Education in the McAlister cabinet. Then he got a federal job as compensation later.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he college president at one time?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he became president of East Tennessee University. U.T. at Johnson City.

He'd been Commissioner of Education I believe he was.

DR. CRAWFORD: He seemed well qualified. Do you know why Mr. Crump did not support him?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, least the story is there were two members of the Crump machine. One of them was Jewish.

DR. CRAWFORD: Will Gerbers, perhaps.

MR. CHENEY: No, it wasn't Willie Gerber. He'd been Gordon Browning's top sergeant. Browning was a captain and he was very eloquently in favor of (Browning). And they were in the machine and they just persuaded the old man Crump to go. Ignoring this--the story is McKellar got a little officious and jumped the gun and assumed that Crump was going, I don't think he came out flat-footedly but he indicated anyhow that he was pushing Burgin Dossett and went ahead under the assumption that Burgin had Crump's support. He proported to speak for Crump and Crump didn't like it and he decided to put him down and I think that was it--just jealousy. He hadn't been duly--McKellar just took a little too much freedom in their relationship.

DR. CRAWFORD: I think that happened over the years.

MR. CHENEY: McKellar swallowed his pride and accepted it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Crump did tend to like people with military background.

MR. CHENEY: He may have. I hadn't ever thought of that.

My relationship with him, well I was just an underling, was very pleasant and I'd admired him and thought he was a very remarkable man. While I was Tom Stewart's secretary up there I called him every week. Tom got to be chairman of the Senate caucus on freight rates. The old man had followed it and was interested in it. Of course I kept the books and being Tom's flunkie I mean, and I briefed him every week on the progress of that and other things because he had an interest in it and a right to know and we were bound to see that he did.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was your title for Tom Stewart?

MR. CHENEY: Executive Secretary. That was before they split it, you know. He was very interested in

TVA too--Mr. Crump was. I would keep him informed about that. There was some rumor that I left Tom to write the Great American Political Novel. I don't know what happened, but Willie Gerber and I was told Joe Carr, was behind it all and Prentice Cooper, and formed the alliance that caused the old man to ditch Tom. I had left the scene. I was down in Georgia working on a novel. I only got back in '48 shortly before the election. I took no part in it. I did have a session with Tom up in the headquarters. There wasn't anything I could do by that time. It was obvious that there was just one move that had to be made. The old man had to be talked sense into or Mr. Crump was going to defeat the faction. Which he did do, but I wasn't anybody who could talk to him. Anyhow....

DR. CRAWFORD: What year did Mr. Crump break with Senator Stewart?

MR. CHENEY: That was in '48. Old Estes was smart to see. With as much rumor going around he was smart to see. He picked a good time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you think Mr. Crump could have done better if he had continued to support Tom Stewart in '48?

MR. CHENEY: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you think Tom Stewart could have won with his support?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. He had a hard campaign against Ned Carmack. Ned Carmack was a damn good campaigner. He was little bit of a crackpot, but. .

DR. CRAWFORD: What year was that campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Let's see. That was '42 I guess.

DR. CRAWFORD: However, it would have been 6 years before
'48 campaign.

MR. CHENEY: I think Tom won it by about 15,000 votes.

Of course, it was attributed by Joe Hatcher
that Crump gave him. Of course he had the Crump machine, but Estes went in
on a minority vote. He didn't go in on a majority vote. You didn't have
to have a majority.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was close.

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

THIS IS A PROJECT OF THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THIS PROJECT IS "RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY". THE PLACE IS SYRMNA, TENNESSEE. THE DATE IS FEBRUARY 18, 1981. THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. BRAINARD CHENEY. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD. DIRECTOR OF THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THIS IS INTERVIEW II. TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Cheney, you covered the campaign of 1930 in which Henry Horton was reelected.

I'd like to talk with you a little about what happened after that concerning the Rogers Caldwell Company and the effect it had on state government. How did things develop after he won election that year?

MR. CHENEY: The Legislature of course, undertook to investigate the relationship of the state government under Horton in connection with the relationship with Caldwell and Company. A joint committee, I believe, was organized. I believe there was Pete Haynes who was then Speaker of the House and Walter Falkner, who was a member of the Senate from Lebanon as Chairman. I was assigned the task by the Banner to write running stories for this hearing.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did the hearing get under way, sir?

MR. CHENEY: It got under way in January--soon after January 31. If the Legislature had made the nominal examination of the thing and proposed an impeachment I have no doubt in my mind that they would have impeached Horton. But it continued the year it went on until summer. They took a vacation. It was an interruption in there. By that time some of the leaders had become suspect. Falkner had come under some criticism certainly in the Tennessean and some scandal was hinted about. And they say sexual scandal in which--check on this--Luke Lea sanctioned--at least it was attributed to his inspiration--in (I am vague on this now) it may have been in the Conservation Department. There was a little state publication--I believe it was in Employment Bureau--that was diverted from its rightful purposes to carry a column of comment by the editor and he broke the scandalous story on Falkner.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was this Senator Falkner? From Lebanon?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. It was done by innuendo, but it had so much currency and Falkner resigned I believe. (That needs to be checked--it was a long time ago).

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, usually sexual scandals back then didn't get in the press.

MR. CHENEY: No. Neither the Banner nor the Tennessean took note of this in the Press, but it had wide currency. (I don't think the Tennessean did or could have.) And

it was done by innuendo--I mean it wasn't barefaced like they do today.

DR. CRAWFORD: They were sort of careful with it.

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did it involve with misuse of government office or anything?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. It certainly did and it gave the committee a black eye and there were some other things that went on in the committee.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was Luke Lea trying to discredit the committee?

MR. CHENEY: Oh my yes. And did. He took the Legislature away from our crowd before the summer was out. They took a vacation and came back and they had been so much discredited down the line that they didn't attempt to impeach the man.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you think that was the main reason why they did not pursue impeachment?

MR. CHENEY: Well, yes. I think Luke got hold of certain members of the Legislature. They bought some of them. For example, road bidding and so forth. At least that was the nature of the rumors that were around at the time. Haynes who became finally the chief leader--Pete--and who else was in there. Anyhow they gave up the fight by fall whenever the last session came and settled for a mild condemnation.

DR. CRAWFORD: I did not know about the efforts of Luke Lea, Mr. Cheney. I had heard that the fact that the Governor's office would go to a Crump supporter was the background, but I didn't know anything about the influence of Luke Lea.

MR. CHENEY: Well, Luke never came out to show his hand. But it was propoerted or was the gossip of the times.

DR. CRAWFORD: Luke Lea was really active at the time. He did not get discredited himself till later.

MR. CHENEY: No. I had a hand in that when he was hiding in the mountains.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year would that have been? A little later in the '30's wasn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Say '34 or somewhere like that.

DR. CRAWFORD: What happened in that case?

MR. CHENEY: Well, this is the story about the Lea trial.

I didn't cover it--the Lea Trial. Ralph Perry covered it in North Carolina--tourist town over there--Asheville. K. T. McConnico--do you know who he was?

DR. CRAWFORD: No.

MR. CHENEY: Well, he was one of the most brilliant lawyers and politicians, but he operated behind the scenes. He was old man House's advisor for many years--Hilliary House.

DR. CRAWFORD: How do you spell his name?

MR. CHENEY: Mc-C-O-N-N-I-C-O, McConnico.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was his first name?

MR. CHENEY: K. T. were his initials. You called [him]
Kip, but I don't know how that was spelled.

He masterminded [things]. Of course, he was a part of the faction that gummed things up later. He was never out front--he was always an advisor behind. But he and Luke Lea were enemies for years. Luke is purported to have threatened to shoot him. That's not a matter of record, but he knew--he had studied--Lea for a good many years as an opponent. The District Attorney's office, I don't know what they call it in North Carolina, Asheville came over here or sent a representative over here to collect information and whatnot and he was directed to see McConnico and McConnico laid the strategy for Lea's conviction. He said Lea is a rooster. He thinks [like] a braggart and if he thinks he can get by with it he will. The problem was to get Lea within the jurisdiction of the court over there. He'll go over there. So they drew a flimsy indictment that Lea knew he could beat and issued it. Then they privately drew another one that Kip McConnico drew himself--25 pages--and held it in the Grand Jury and Lea went over and was making public statements and so forth and they got him over there and switched indictments on him. G--, (Laughter). They got him and gave him four years--three--four years I think it was. I think that is a pretty reliable story you know.

DR. CRAWFORD: The problem was getting him within the jurisdiction of the court.

MR. CHENEY: So they tried him and convicted him and then he came back here under bond and jumped his bond and went to the mountains and hid out around Sergeant York's preserve up there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Up in Cumberlands?

MR. CHENEY: Yep, up in the Cumberlands. And I went up there and turned him up. I mean he had a body guard with him and he was standing out there on a hill in a mountain farm and I had a lot of contacts up there at that time. Of course, I couldn't have done it except for the fact that I had contacts with the other faction. They told me where he was and I went out there. Of course I didn't get to see him, but I saw the body guard and. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he know you?

MR. CHENEY: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, you had to be careful where you went, didn't you?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Then I got the tip that he was in Jimtown.

DR. CRAWFORD: What place?

MR. CHENEY: Jamestown--we called it "Jim town"--in his lawyer's office, Willie Garrett. I went over there to Willie's office and I knew that they weren't going to tell

me anything. I'd give him the opportunity to deny it and I knocked on the door and Willie came to the door and I said, "I understand that Luke Lea is in your office." He slammed the door in my face. Willie was always about half drunk.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was this? An Attorney?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. What his real initials were I cannot say, but they called him Willie Garrett.

I went back to my car--I had parked in front--and started to back out and as I started backing I looked back over my shoulder and here was Little Luke sticking his head in the window to look at me and I saw how visible he and Billie was so I beat it back.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was this Luke Lea that you saw at the window?

MR. CHENEY: His son was with him. They were prosecuted together. It was the boy that I saw rather than the old man, but that was enough. So I called the office just in time to make the Sports Edition and that night about fifteen reporters all piled into "Jimtown" and Luke came out of hiding then and deputized all his body guards. (laughter) Came over and occupied the Governor's Suite in the hotel--The Mark Twain Hotel. I had the only room. It was like a nigger at a Klu Klux meeting. Luke had taken the whole top floor of the hotel except for my room.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you happen to have a room there?

MR. CHENEY: Well, I was staying at the hotel before he came out of hiding, you see.

DR. CRAWFORD: This was just an accident that you were on the floor?

MR. CHENEY: Well, it is only a two-story hotel. There was a kind of comic opera that went on there for several days. Luke was trying to get a habeas corpus action in the hands of one of his judges and the judges were sort of shying away because it was becoming kind of, as I said, a comic opera. This was a thing that couldn't win and people were beginning to laugh, you know. As long as these were just rumors that he was hiding up in the mountains there you know nobody could lay a hand on him, there was something romantic about it, but now it was getting comic. He first tried a judge that was over at Crossville. I can't think of his name now. This fellow got sick and wouldn't hear it. Then I was sitting there and I got a tip that he was going up to "Jimtown" on the Kentucky border. This was in January and cold.

DR. CRAWFORD: About '34?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. Anyhow it was snowing I remember.

I got the word that they were going up there that night to. . . the name will come to me. . .anyhow I sailed out after a wild snowstorm. I got to the hotel where the judge was. I can't remember his name now. I knew him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he a judge friendly to Luke Lea?

MR. CHENEY: Well, Luke had a hand in his appointment.

But when I got to his room he let me in his

room and he said, "I'm drunk and I'm going to stay dog drunk until Luke Lea gets out of town." He told me this, "Don't you worry, I'm not going to sit on." (Laughter) It was right funny. So little Luke got there and they found out they couldn't get the Judge sober enough to sit on the trial so he came back. And then he tried and the last time the sheriff--an innocent kind of a mountaineer name Peviehouse.

DR. CRAWFORD: Sheriff Peviehouse?

MR. CHENEY: Sheriff Peviehouse. I got this later, but there was one newspaperman there that had been at one time on the Tennessean. He was Earl Shaw. Earl was representing International News at that time. Anyhow, he was more or less sympathetic with the Lea faction. He was the only newspaperman that was in on this. At night, about 2 o'clock in the morning, I think, Lea took the Sheriff and his ex-body guard who were now deputies in two cars and went up to the Kentucky line. They were only a few miles from the Kentucky line up there. And he ran down in Kentucky came back down to Clarksville where he had a Judge that he thought he had. But the Judge had a change of heart. I don't know what. We were notified the next day and all went down there. He handed him over to his bondsman and didn't grant him habeas corpus and then Luke went back and that was the end of Lea's fiasco--anti-climatic.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that all reported in the paper?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. There was one little incident. Frank Waldrop was on the Tennessean--I,

at that time as Managing Editor, can still see it. And Frank was sort of a great big fellow. [He had] played guard on a football team at West Point. He came up there after Lea had come out of hiding at the Mark Twain Hotel and they thought that I knew. And I was shadowed all the time by one of them plus others. They thought that I was in touch with the bondsman. I didn't know any more where the bondsman was than they did. And a bondsman can pick up his prey anyway, you know if you have jumped the bond, nobody can stop the bondsman if he is there. He can have you arrested. This was something that Luke was trying to avoid and he came into my room and argued his case with me and he was the damnest man you ever knew and had more brass than anybody.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was this Luke Lea?

MR. CHENEY: That was the old man, yeah. To argue his case with me, you know. I didn't argue of course but I'd listen to him. As a matter of fact this was a picture that I liked to remember. When he came out of hiding, his crowd came into the courthouse. It was a bright day about fourteen below zero. It was frozen glittering with snow there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was this Clarksville?

MR. CHENEY: Jamestown. I was at the hotel. He came walking from the courthouse over to the hotel. The town all around was watching it. He said, "Hello Lon." (He was a hail fellow), I was scared of him, because he would do you in quick. He got near the steps and he said, "Well, how did you sleep

last night? I know you slept well because you snored so loud you kept me awake." The inference being was that he was right next to me and I didn't know it, you know. Well, the whole town laughed and I laughed too and there wasn't a damn thing I could do but laugh too. I had a lot of eyes around there and I kept pretty close tabs on him. That was a lie. (Referring to Lea's inference.) He wasn't in the hotel at all. But that was the joke. Anyhow we carried out a friendly surface of things. He recognized I was his enemy of a sort--likeable enemies so to speak. He was the damnest man and came up and argued his case, I said for an hour or two, how he had been mistreated and all through the courts and all. Anyhow by the time The Scrip-Howard man (can't think of that boy's name now from Memphis) was there and they were very much anti-Lea. Lea was having a press conference every day at the hotel. He was a great performer. He was giving them a lot of anecdotes and self-advertisement and whatnot. Of course, I didn't attend. This Scrip-Howard man came to me and said, "I'm tired of being a press agent for Luke Lea." "Let's stir up a little mystery of our own around here." Well, get a hold of somebody else. There was only one telephone out of there and we had given it over to Western Union. And we had to take tapes and it had to be publicly done if you dictated over the telephone. I took a magazine over to my table and spun the pages and read the words that struck my vision while this boy typed it--about a three hundred word taken and we got it down there and turned it over to the Western Union man to read.

DR. CRAWFORD: I assume Luke Lea had someone listening?

MR. CHENEY: That's right. Little Luke was listening but it didn't make any sense. We were obviously saying something in code and oh they just got busy running all around the house. So about that time we got in a car slipping out the back way and struck out for some advice from the only lawyer there that was on our side that I had a relationship with. As soon as we heard that car started they ran a parallel pipe right behind us. Then we turned around and came back to pay a call to the lawyer. I've forgotten his name. We hadn't been there two minutes before there was a rap on the door and here came Waldrop and one of his henchmen to see what we were doing. We just passed the time with it and after a little while came on back to the hotel just for the hell of it. Anyhow that was a day or two before Luke Lea made his last transfer over to Clarksville. Of course, when he got out of court there in Clarksville he had a man waiting who took him on off.

DR. CRAWFORD: The bondsman was waiting there.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, his bodyguards were deputized in some counties?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, Peviehouse--that was Fentress County, I guess. Peviehouse was sheriff there and he deputized the bodyguards.

DR. CRAWFORD: So really he had legal protection for awhile.

MR. CHENEY: Yes. However illegally he had it. He had friends up there. I never did see publicly Alvin York.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he a friend of Luke Lea's?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Very much so.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, Luke Lea had been a colonel in World War I, hadn't he?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he had a regiment--cavalry regiment.

DR. CRAWFORD: He had many friends.

MR. CHENEY: Many friends as a matter of fact, it was one of his captains over at Clarksville that directed that over there. The captain either--he wasn't the Judge, but he miscued on this judge. It was an old county judge--I should know his name--its left me. He thought that the Judge was going to give him a habeas corpus, but he didn't do it.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suppose there was a lot of pressure on the judges then. They could have been criticized a great deal.

MR. CHENEY: Sure and that Clarksville paper was in the hands of receivers--newspaper there. There were banks.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suppose many people in Tennessee by then in the depression were not sympathetic with Lea-Caldwell people.

MR. CHENEY: He'd run out of friends and partisans just about by that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was the reporter--Frank Waldrop from the Tennessean?

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Is he still in Nashville?

MR. CHENEY: No. Frank later went on to greater fame during World War II. He was publisher of Cissy Patterson's paper in Washington. When Cissy died, she left the paper in her will to Frank and seven other members--the printer and advertiser so forth. The seven men inherited it and sold it for a million dollars apiece.

DR. CRAWFORD: Is he in Washington now? Retired?

MR. CHENEY: Retired yes. Frank has done some writing. I've got a book he did on Buddy McCormick, of the Chicago Tribune. I saw him here last fall. He usually comes down to Monteagle. Frank and his wife and I maintained a friendship over the years. At the time we were police reporters--I on the Banner and he on the Tennessean. And he married a girl who was a classmate and fraternity sister of my wife and we were pretty thick in those early days. We have sort of kept up with each other over the years.

DR. CRAWFORD: Even though you worked for opposing papers.

MR. CHENEY: Reporters have always hung together. We drank the same liquor that we stole out of

the deputies' haul and things like that. (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember the name of the press man from Memphis who covered this incident with Luke Lea trying to avoid extradition?

MR. CHENEY: What's the Scrip-Howard paper name there?

DR. CRAWFORD: The Commercial Appeal and the Press-Scimitar.

MR. CHENEY: It was the Press-Scimitar man. Who was it? It almost come to me.

DR. CRAWFORD: He would not have been Null Adams?

MR. CHENEY: It was Null Adams, yes it was Null. I suppose The Commercial Appeal was owned by some Scrips-Howard men at one time in there. I can't remember who--Hilton Butler had left--I don't know. I think maybe some of them from the Tennessean. You know The Lea-Caldwell Corporation owned The Commercial Appeal for a time. But I know Null Adams was there for the Press-Scimitar.

DR. CRAWFORD: Null is retired in Memphis now.

MR. CHENEY: I like Null very much. I saw him over there a year or two [ago].

DR. CRAWFORD: He ran unsuccessfully, I think, for City Council after he retired.

MR. CHENEY: Tony Vacarro was over there, but Tony was with the Associated Press. Tony died, I understand.

DR. CRAWFORD: Died in Washington, I believe. He was a

brother-in-law of my uncle. His sister married my uncle. Tony was transferred to Washington. He also covered this?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I kept up with Tony for some years but lost track of him.

DR. CRAWFORD: I think he spent his later career in Washington.

MR. CHENEY: Did he? At that time Scrips-Howard had a publisher. Benton Stone was the youngest publisher-editor of the News Sentinel and then he got a paper out in the west, and he developed a bad drinking problem. When I encountered him during the War in Washington he had left Scrips-Howard and taken a cure and didn't drink at all and was somewhere in the government in public relations. Tony covered the White House.

DR. CRAWFORD: I think he did. He had a famous interview with Harry Truman.

MR. CHENEY: He was very close to Harry Truman.

DR. CRAWFORD: I think he had the last interview with Harry Truman when he was leaving office.

MR. CHENEY: I could give you Frank Waldrop's address if you are interested in having it in Washington.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes sir, I would like to have that. I'd like to get in touch with him also when I am in Washington.

MR. CHENEY: Frank was on the Tennessean in the last

years.

DR. CRAWFORD: How successful was Henry Horton's last term in office? Was he discredited much by the attempted impeachment?

MR. CHENEY: The old man felt that he had been exonerated and wanted to run again.

DR. CRAWFORD: In '32?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, in '32. Of course there were others that didn't agree with him. But that's how he felt about it. Of course, he wasn't ever indicted or didn't face trial or anything.

DR. CRAWFORD: Of course, the state faced serious problems because of the depression anyway--not to mention the loss of the state funds.

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Of course McAlister had got that job when nobody else wanted it. The state was in a hell of a shape.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, it certainly was financially. How did he get that in the election of '32? Did you cover that election?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Well, they decided that he had won it and he deserved it. Let's see--Ham Patterson came into that. I have a feeling now that it was never a very hot contest.

Luke Lea-Caldwell machine was officially discredited, and that McAlister had a fairly easy race.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you say that Ham Patterson had something to do with it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he entered the race.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was this the son of Malcolm Patterson?

MR. CHENEY: He was an old man then, you know. He'd been over there as a chancellor in the court there.

THIS IS A PROJECT OF THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THIS PROJECT IS "RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY". THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. BRAINARD "LON" CHENEY AND THE PLACE IS SMYRNA, TENNESSEE AND THE DATE IS JUNE 27, 1981. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD; DIRECTOR OF THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEWS #3, and #4.

MR. CHENEY: Offhand my simple recollection centered around this. Hill [McAlister], you know, had run twice before, and he made three races over a period of eight years I guess it was. (Two year term then.) It might be said that all his phophesies had come true, or were coming true by the time that he finally got there. He had an easy victory in '32.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes sir. What do you remember about that campaign, Mr. Cheney, of 1932?

MR. CHENEY: Well, agricultural depression was on then. Not the acute Depression, but it was still very hard-up. This was the depths of the Depression when Hill got in there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, that was the year Franklin Roosevelt was elected.

MR. CHENEY: It was pretty squirrelly there for awhile. Hill was hard of hearing and sort of a quiet man and he was not dramatic in any showy way. I had the highest re-

gard for him. I thought he got a very dirty deal myself by my paper and along with some others.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, it was customary for your paper to be the opposition, wasn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Well, we were for Hill. We had been against the Horton-Lea-Caldwell machine. Hill was supposed to be our man. His friends put the knife in him. For a while up there I remember the scrap and there were men and women sleeping in the cars up in the capital at night [Because] they had no where to go. It was pretty rough. Hill was listening to complaints all day long, which wasn't running the government, but he had to do it.

I remember a kind of sour joke that developed over this going on a good long time when this joke came into circulation. He was deaf-- he was hard of hearing and had a hearing aid. He used to say those sitting, many of them appealing for anything they could get, and they'd say, "We might as well quit! He done cut the radio off!" (Laughter) They were accusing him of cutting off his hearing aid.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, he didn't have much money in the treasury to do anything with when he came in, did he?

MR. CHENEY: No, it was broke. He did some remarkable things because of that situation. People were scared and a lot of people didn't have jobs and they weren't too much occupied too much otherwise and they took considerable interest in their legislators and came down here and so forth. Offhand there were

two or three things he did. He did the first balancing the budget. It [had been] a kind of a black magic legerdemain. Nobody knew quite how to do it. Two or three men there whose names ought to come back to me who were supposed to have a great hand in it. Nobody knew whether it was balanced or not. He [McAlister] initiated the first preliminary work to put in modern bookkeeping. It began with Hill.

Of course, Gordon [Browning] got credit for it because it actually came. . . . But they had to find out what they had before they could change it. This began with McAlister. I could say offhand two or three things he did. This was not considered a very popular thing, but a heroic thing in the way he cut the school budget. No, he diverted highway funds into the school budget. You know they lived on the old gospel, "the gas that pays it and [it] must go to the highway." But the state was in such a bad shape they diverted it.

What he actually did--there were probably school teachers all over the state that had these warrants that were worthless and they couldn't cash them in. They had to have the money and he got enough money by diverting this gas tax to pay off the teachers and give the bonds value again. He did some very solid things. He did cut down the payroll. Well everybody--a dollar was a big thing then and we had had a decrease in value or a deflation. He succeeded and that was his first administration. This is real sketchy, but it is the way I remember it now. I was sitting in with him and I was very fond of him, a quiet man and he didn't sound off much and he wasn't a fighter, but what they decided and I was in on this. In his office we had a political expert, a tax man, and the Crump's man, Roxie Rice, and I guess a couple of members of

the legislature.

DR. CRAWFORD: Frank Rice, I suppose.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, Frank Rice. The Tennessee Retailers Association was represented there, the Attorney General was in the group and Jimmy Stahlman sat in on it or some of them. They decided that it was a radical step, but they had to have the sales tax.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now this was in the administration of Hill McAlister?

MR. CHENEY: That's right. There was a huddle there in his office and they all agreed that there wasn't any way out of it and that they had to have a sales tax. This (it won't come to me right now--the name--but you would know him. He's written on politics and History in Tennessee and I think he had a hand in Peay's reforms.) Anyhow he was the expert on the sales tax. I don't know who was responsible for this. I mean, whether it was a trick or just a piece of state stupidity, but after they agreed on it which was done, the Attorney General wrote an opinion. He was softshoed. He didn't think it was constitutional to specify that the merchants must absorb [that] the taxes and[^]was the question in it.

DR. CRAWFORD: What business group was represented?

MR. CHENEY: The Retail Merchants Association. I remember they played their part in this. The Municipal League was represented in that too and they had a man. I'll have to look over my list, but to make it perfect, but they were all vital elements.

Crump, after they went back home considered about it, decided that this was going to fall on labor. That labor or that this was going to have to be absorbed by the taxpayer and he backed off from it. He communicated with Jimmy. Stahlman and he were pretty close then. Personally, this was my position. They didn't communicate with me. Old man Armstead was our editor then and the old man was in his eighties. Of course, that's not as old now as I thought it was back then since I am eighty-one. (Laughter) But he never communicated with me and I was Jimmy's man on the Hill. I don't think he ever read anything I ever wrote. I think he read what Joe Hatcher wrote in the Tennessean. He'd believe Joe. Joe had a lot more prestige than I had anyhow. He'd been writing politics now for many years and I was a newcomer.

DR. CRAWFORD: Joe had started in the early twenties I think.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. We had been openly supporting this tax bill. That day it broke open that we might-- say the consensus broke down that was supporting it. I didn't know a d--- thing about it till the Banner hit the street. The noon edition hit the street and we had a front page editorial. (Laughter) And I was their man up on the Hill.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was a surprise to you?

MR. CHENEY: Oh boy! I went back raising h--- about it.

Anyhow it didn't do me any good. Aside from my point of view, McAlister was a responsible man--a quiet man--and he thought he had this set up. They all agreed and then they backed out of it. Both Crump and Stahlman and I think eventually the Chattanooga Times if that's my recollection and of course the Retail Association

had backed out of it. They left him holding the bag.

They had worked out the budget and the Legislature was here and was set. So he was in bad shape. They kind of made a patch-work, half-adequate kind of an arrangement that year.

I remember saying this, "Governor, you ought to publicly expose them and tell them about it."

He wouldn't do it. I said, "Look they are going to do to you, why don't you play the game." He wouldn't do it.

I remember his saying, "No, these have been my political friends for all my public life. I can't do that. Mr. Crump and I. . ." It didn't make sense to me.

There was one other thing--it is spotty, but I always think of it because it was a piece of bad luck--a man who deserves a lot better, suffered in a situation that anybody in politics may fall heir to.

Near the end of his second administration they uncovered (who originally uncovered it I don't know) but at the time I knew about it it had already been given into the hands of the District Attorney General Carlton Loser. At that time the price of kerosene was considerably below gasoline. These probably should be checked and I don't have a good head to figure it, but there was a nickel difference in price. Within the gas tax collections department of the Finance and Taxation Department a conspiracy was formed by these men--the head of the group and I don't know how many of his underlings. You see, these gas tank inspectors and this kerosene--they were in collusion with about 17 distributors and dealers in town. They were billing it falsely and taking this nickel's difference in price and splitting it. It was

taxes and was tax money of course. Loser had these indictments all drawn. The case was ready to break. I know this because Carlton told me this.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who had the indictments sir?

MR. CHENEY: The local District Attorney General whose name was Carlton Loser for Davidson County.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes.

MR. CHENEY: He called in a personal friend he knew and, out of decency he said, he knew the man, his family and all. The Grand Jury was going to make the report the next morning in court with this long list of indictments. And he called this man in that night and he prepared him for it and told him it was coming up. Well, what he hadn't calculated on happening, the man blew his brains out that night. Well you had the head of the plot and he was out of the way and they brought this thing finally to trial. There wasn't any support for running after these rabbits. The villain in the plot was out of way. He was beyond our reach and there wasn't anything and the case fizzled. And what happened in that illogical way in politics, Hill McAlister got blamed for it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why was he blamed for it?

MR. CHENEY: Justice and the thing that he was the head of the government, you know, and people were saying, "He had something to do with that."

And he went out of office under a shadow. He had done everything he could do. There wasn't a d--- thing he could do to prevent it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was the conspiracy leader who committed suicide?

MR. CHENEY: I can't come up with his name.

DR. CRAWFORD: But he was in the oil business?

MR. CHENEY: No, he was head of this bureau in the state.
He was a state official, you see.

DR. CRAWFORD: In charge of collecting taxes?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, in charge of collecting the gas tax. You
see you had several bureaus in the Finance and
Taxation Department and this was a big bureau. There were about maybe
a dozen deputies and there wasn't any glory in running after some of
the deputies. He had sort of masterminded it and he'd taken himself off
saying it was one of those. It was no real logic, except McAlister got
the blame for it. He went out under a shadow and chiefly on that ac-
count. Of course, there had been that he had had some other reverses,
but this was one of those things.

DR. CRAWFORD: What about the sales tax fiasco? Was that his
first administration?

MR. CHENEY: No, that was his second administration. And
you see we never got a gas tax (sales tax) for
some years after that. Well, they first put it in for the schools,
didn't they. And then the school teachers all voted against Jim McCord--
Cousin Jim. That's what beat him, you know. But it went in factually
at that time. But you see that was about ten years later after McAlister.
It took a while to get it in effect. It was resisted.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yeah, that was about ten years later in the for-
ties.

MR. CHENEY: Well, offhand that's my fragmented recollections

of the McAlister administration. He did validate the bonds by those measures of his first administration by diversion against tax money. He did initiate the groundwork for changing the machinery for the accounting system for the state.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, the state credit was in bad shape when Hill McAlister came in, wasn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes it was. He restored the credit, bonds and these warrants--there must have been several hundred thousand dollars in these school warrants. You know that was real hard times--the school teachers.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did he get along with Mr. Crump?

MR. CHENEY: Well, of course, they had been hand and glove for many years. Crump had supported him in his two previous races and supported him up to that point. He didn't break with Crump. He wasn't a man to and I guess he wasn't in a position to. (Laughter) He swallowed his pride or whatever he had to swallow and went ahead and tried to do what he could. I don't have any clear recollection of what kind of substitute taxation, I do know that they tried to get a little bit here and a little bit there and make do. But there was no adequate substitute tax form as I recall.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you remember about Governor McAlister's background sir?

MR. CHENEY: Well, of course, it is very illustrious. He had two governors in his ancestry. The last territorial governor and I believe one was Wiley Blount and there was another one offhand. Of course, his father had been a judge on the

Supreme Court and his wife was a daughter of a Supreme Court Justice. I guess Hill was the last blue stocking governor we've had.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where did he live before he was elected?

MR. CHENEY: He had been State Treasurer. He lived out there on West End somewhere. That was when West End was still residential.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was there any dishonesty in government to your knowledge when he was governor?

MR. CHENEY: Except for this little blow-up that he wasn't responsible for that I told you about I don't know of anything else that came to daylight. I never heard of any. No, I don't know of any other scandal and he certainly wasn't responsible in this one either. He did everything he could and had been very responsible about it. No, not offhand. I don't recollect any. I think he. . . well, I might be a little romantic about it, but he was a man of the best character.

DR. CRAWFORD: He just had the misfortune then to be governor during the Depression?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Charlie Moss who was on the Banner with me and had written politics before I took over, had covered Hill's early campaigns--not the last one, but one of the early ones--said that Hill was sort of a bellyacher and didn't have much campaign guts. I never saw that and I don't know what Charlie based it on.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was Mr. Crump his supporter till the end of his administration?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, that is, publicly aside from this knifing

in private--yes. Hill did not break with Crump. Crump was a man that nobody broke with him unless he had to. Browning came along and broke with him, but Browning came out at the little end of the horn on that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know if McAlister knew they were withdrawing support for the Sales Tax. Do you know when he learned about it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, it was like over a long week-end. I never knew what happened--I suspected it. And I won't say, [this except] this is unsupported by anything I know of, that the Attorney General was a party to this--he sat in on this huddle--he did not bring it up at the time it was only later that he discovered that he didn't think this was constitutional. This was the thing that they all used as an excuse for backing off of it.

DR. CRAWFORD: But he did not raise that point at the beginning then?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. At the consensus when it was announced there were no qualifications at that time. I mean he hadn't--this issue hadn't come up, [or] been raised.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you think the person who first turned against it was Mr. Crump?

MR. CHENEY: I haven't got anything to go on except (this is kind of heresay). There were those who thought the Retail Merchants Association got to him and there were some people in the labor movement. Rumors definitely came from down in Memphis. I think they just got scared of it, I guess.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did Jimmy Stahlman remain friendly with Governor McAlister throughout his service?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he remained friends, ostensibly so. They may say they knifed Hill, but he took it. He never complained so they had no reason to take offense with him. Yes, we stayed with him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember anything about his second campaign in 1934?

MR. CHENEY: Well, I covered it, but I can't remember anything right offhand. It was not a very strenuous campaign. Let's see, I'll have to refresh myself of it. Lou Pope. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: P-O-P-E?

MR. CHENEY: P-O-P-E. Pope was in. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you say Lou Pope was the meanest man you had seen on the stump? (Laughter) What did he campaign for?

MR. CHENEY: Governor. He ran against McAlister. Did he run both races in '32? It was '32 I think that Pope made the bitter race. He mouthed around about contesting the election, but didn't do it.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was Pope's background?

MR. CHENEY: He'd been head of the Collections Department. I don't know what they called it back then. He served there some time, I guess under Peay for three terms. He came from East Tennessee and was a good campaigner and a good stump speaker.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was his stump speaking like?

MR. CHENEY: Well, that was it, he led a fight. He could rouse people and make them fightin' mad. As a matter of fact I remember coming into a meeting over in West Tennessee--small town like Halls (can't be sure it was Halls--somewhere in the bottoms) and I came up the aisle in the Court House and he said, "There he is (shouting) that lying Banner reporter," and so forth and so on. (Laughter).

I thought they were going to mob me there for awhile. (Laughter). He was vindictive and a personal attack. He made them fighting mad. He was very persuasive.

DR. CRAWFORD: But he was not successful against McAlister?

MR. CHENEY: No, no. He said they stole it from him I am sure, but I don't know if he had any proof of it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, a little stealing on both sides was not uncommon then was it?

MR. CHENEY: No. It was said that the story when McAlister lost an earlier race that Crump had called the Banner office to talk to Ralph Perry and had said, "What will it take? Will 10,000 votes put him over?" Perry said, "Yeah easy." So that wasn't enough and we lost the election. (Laughter) Perry had guessed wrong.

DR. CRAWFORD: Perry?

MR. CHENEY: Ralph Perry. I was his understudy in politics.

DR. CRAWFORD: On the Banner?

MR. CHENEY: On the Banner, yeah. He later went to the Ten-

nessean and Ralph was Hill's first secretary.

He was on the Banner at the time that Hill was elected and he became Hill's secretary. I don't know if he served throughout Hill's two terms or not. I think maybe he did and then later went to the Tennessean and wrote politics for some years.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you think anyone else could have done much better than Hill McAlister?

MR. CHENEY: In those times? No. You might have had--it's possible--some more aggressive man might have gotten the sales tax over, but I don't know what would have happened if they had passed the sales tax and it would have been explosive. I think these people had some reason for concern and McAlister realized it was radical medicine. I don't know--that is one of those imponderable questions. Austin Peay whom I never knew except very casually, I didn't follow politics on the hill when he was there. He was a very practical and a very powerful man--morally powerful man.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you say morally powerful?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, in the general sense of that word.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you mean sir?

MR. CHENEY: He was practical as I said. He knew what to expect of men and he knew how to hold them to. . .

He was very realistic. And I think he was honest. This is two times talk--I never heard it personally. It was reported to me by Hoffman, our Capital man. Lea at that time was one of Peay's main supporters.

DR. CRAWFORD: Colonel Luke Lea?

MR. CHENEY: Colonel Luke Lea. Lea had come to Peay with some

proposition and Peay is supposed to have said,
"Luke, I wished I knew what was going on in your mind."

He (Peay) was supposed to have said, "God save me from my friends,
I can take care of my enemies." That's the way he felt about Luke.

(Laughter) Hoffman said he approached Major Stahlman to see if he could
swap horses in mid-stream. I mean he couldn't turn the Tennessean loose
if he didn't have somewhere. He was that uncertain and that suspicious
of his friend Luke Lea.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, do you believe that the experience of
Henry Horton proved that it was well to be sus-
picious?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, yes indeed. Of course, Horton. . . There
were those who said that the old man never knew
what the score was. I don't know, and that he considered they were
authorities for what was right and wrong and for what was good for Ten-
nessee and with what Luke and Rogers told him. I was not that close to
the situation and certainly not that close to Horton.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you feel that Austin Peay was strong enough
to control his supporters, but Henry Horton
was not?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, definitely. Peay was a practical politi-
cian and he intended to run that thing straight.
I'm convinced of that. He used to if he wasn't busy in the afternoon or
something happening he used to go unannounced up and down the corridors
in offices of people in the War Memorial Building over there. You could
look up anytime and see the governor. He knew pretty much what was going

on. He tried to keep abreast of it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now this was Austin Peay?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, this was Austin Peay. I don't think McAlister was that kind. Well, in the first place he was a deaf man and he was hard of hearing and [that] tends to isolate a man. He was less suspicious than Peay in nature. But I think he was an honorable and sincere man.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, did Luke Lea have any influence left by the time that McAlister became governor?

MR. CHENEY: Oh yes. He was still, his position was considerably jeopardized. I think Luke had influence up until they ran him out of the mountains and carried him off. For people who believed in him he had a great hold over a lot of people. There were those who didn't think they would ever get him in the pen, you know.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, it seemed doubtful for a long time, didn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: When did you start believing they would?

MR. CHENEY: I have never figured on that. I was not a lawyer, but it was common sense judgment when they got him into court in Clarksville that we had reason to believe that the hearing was going to go the way that it did. And [from] the decision of the judge we believed, he didn't really have a leg to stand on. What he was trying was a habeas corpus action that would take him out of the grip of his bondsman. You can't get away from your bondsman, it's real hard you

know. (Laughter) That was really comic opera.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why do you say it was comic opera, sir?

MR. CHENEY: Well, his assumptions weren't very realistic.

 This habeas corpus scheme of his called for really extralegal action on the part of the judge. Any judge that would do this was taking his reputation into his own hands. Lea had practically lost out by this time and the trial had been going on a couple of years. That is, he had been tried and convicted and appealed and every time he had jumped his bond. It was a last stand. It wasn't very reasonable enterprise on his part.

DR. CRAWFORD: Then Luke Lea's hope to not be convicted really depended on the judge?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, a corrupt judge for that matter. I mean this was not law. In other words he would have to ignore common jurisprudence. How it turned out there wasn't any judge that was going to do that. The first man of course, Luke had gotten him appointed, recused himself.

 And the second man he went before, I'm glad I can't remember his name. I could if I saw it. This was out at "Jimtown" and this was at Jellico. I got word that Luke was going to appear before the judge up there whom I knew. I drove up there through a snow storm I remember. I guess we both drove through that snow storm. I didn't know whether I was going to get there or not, but I did. I sent word to the judge when I got there and he admitted me into his office and he was drunk. He said to me, "I suppose you know I'm drunk and I am going to stay drunk till Luke gets out of town. I'm going to be too drunk to get on

the bench." (Laughter) That's what he did.

DR. CRAWFORD: One recused himself and the other was too drunk to hear the case.

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Then he finally got over to old Judge at Clarksville. Let's see I can't think of his name--too bad--one of his old war time captains, Collier Goodlett who had been a captain under Luke in a World War I regiment.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was Collier Goodlett a judge?

MR. CHENEY: A lawyer. Collier got him over there, that is I don't know what. Luke probably called Collier, I don't know. Anyhow Collier took his case and did what he could for him. The judge just wasn't going to do it. He didn't do it.

DR. CRAWFORD: That's an interesting case. Then it seems to you, doesn't it that Luke Lea's only hope was in a judge who would act improperly and sometimes that might have been done. But the Banner was keeping a very close watch on this, wasn't it, as to what any judge did?

MR. CHENEY: That's why I call it comic opera because I mean if he'd been thinking a little more realistically clearly he would have known that the jig was up and he couldn't get by with it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Still Mr. Lea had a history of. . .

MR. CHENEY: Wheeling and dealing. Yes, nobody had more of that in his career, yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Of getting people to do what he wanted.

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I wasn't there--it was before my day, but

I've heard about it. He snatched a gal out of the party caucus supposedly at the hands of the chairman of the caucus and nominated himself and elected himself to office early in his career. He was high-handed and spectacular.

DR. CRAWFORD: It's not unknown for politicians to get overconfident in Tennessee and feel that they can get away with things.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah.

DR. CRAWFORD: What sort of person was Colonel Lea personally?

MR. CHENEY: Well, of course, I was on the opposite paper and didn't have any close relationship with him.

At that time on his staff there were a good many loyal men to him, most of them were. Though some of them weakened before it was over with.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you think bound them to him in loyalty?

MR. CHENEY: He was a flamboyant sort of fellow and had a great deal of personal charm and comradery. I remember when he came out of hiding at Jimtown it was in January and it was cold and 14° below as I remember. There was a bright sun and this glittering snowfield near the Court House and the little town all gathered around at the Mark Twain Hotel, a little hotel on the side of the square. I was standing on the steps and he came across there. And what had been his bodyguard was now become the deputy sheriff bringing him in, he said, "How are you, Lon?"

And he turned to the crowd and said--and I greeted him--and he said, "You know Lon, you kept me awake last night."

He said I was in the room next to him in the hotel and I was snoring

and he said, "You were snoring so loud I couldn't sleep!"

The inference to this was that I was the blood hound looking for him and he was in the room right next to me and I didn't know it. Everybody laughed and I laughed too. He could put you under real quick. (Laughter) We were publicly amiable and he was a "hail fellow well met." They took up a suite of rooms there--he and his staff. He came in my room--I had the only room left up there you see on the second floor--two or three times to argue his case with me, how he had been mistreated and. . .There wasn't anyone like him. H--- I wouldn't argue with him of course. He was a very remarkable man.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now he was finally sent to prison in North Carolina, wasn't he?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, that is why they got him. There wasn't anyone he could fix over there. Of course, he eventually ran out of friends in Tennessee. The saying was, that old Luke had done it to too many men who would like to see him in jail.

DR. CRAWFORD: How much of his political power did he ever get back after he finished prison?

MR. CHENEY: Not really [any]. Luke moved about and I was certainly not remote from him and he was in a shadowy realm and I never knew what he was doing and I didn't know anybody else [who knew] what he was doing. Apparently he was trying to do a little brokering with war surplus.

Anyway, this is a slight experience I had. At the time I was Senator Tom Stewart's secretary and Little Luke (his son) was with him and Luke and Little Luke called me and they wanted an introduction or some-

thing like that. I was leary and weary of it and it never did develop and there was no request or demand that was embarrassing for us, but it was sort of casual, but I couldn't figure out quite what they were doing, but I got the impression that they were fooling with war surplus.

Then let's see it wasn't too long--its been a long time ago now--I would say after he got out of prison, two or three years maybe--you can check on that--he developed a convulsive stomach trouble and died of it. It was nerves that finally got him. I don't know what the medical term for it is, but it was a nervous stomach--couldn't eat or digest food.

DR. CRAWFORD: No Tennessee governor has ever yet been sent to prison, but in this case the man who controlled Tennessee governors, I suppose, was sent.

MR. CHENEY: He certainly controlled several. There were those who didn't believe that it would ever happen. And it wouldn't have happened if they hadn't gotten him in North Carolina. (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: They would never have sent him to jail.

MR. CHENEY: They would never have put him in Tennessee.

DR. CRAWFORD: How important was his control of the newspaper empire?

MR. CHENEY: It was important. He ran a partisan paper and he worked at it and it was important. Yes, I would say it was a very aggressive newspaper and partisan. We had partisan camps back then you know. The reporters didn't even talk to each other. The local news that had any political significance was slanted generally speaking.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did he do financially after his imprisonment?

MR. CHENEY: I would say generally not well. Of course, they pretty well took everything he had away from him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you suppose they found everything?

MR. CHENEY: No, they may not have. His paper and real estate--this will be heresay with me. I know that Mrs. Lea went to work. She had a job. Percy Lea was killed about that time in those days.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was Percy Lea?

MR. CHENEY: There were two of those boys by his first wife, Little Luke and Percy. Percy worked on the Tennessean after it was put into receivership. He was on the paper at the time and remained. He was a very different boy from Little Luke and very much generally liked. I think he died in an automobile accident.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now Little Luke is still living, isn't he?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, I'm sure he is.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did Luke Lea keep his home through all of this?

MR. CHENEY: No, he lost it. Lea made--he lost. I know he lost it. I don't know any of the details particularly this because they were living in a rented place there off of West End.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, Mrs. Lea lives off West End now.

MR. CHENEY: They had a home there where Golf Club Lane as

it goes across West End. There's a block beyond there, they had a home. Soupy and I had a year with this youngest child.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did Luke Lea own the land where Belle Meade Country Club is now?

MR. CHENEY: I couldn't tell you. He even helped to develop Belle Meade and he owned a good bit of real estate out there, but exactly what he owned. I kind of have an impression that he did, but I wouldn't be willing to say.

DR. CRAWFORD: I had heard that he did, but later after his trouble he was, I believe, expelled from Belle Meade Country or not allowed to be a member or something.

MR. CHENEY: He may well have been. He may have crocked them. This is curious. I was trying to think of the name of that street off of West End and they were living on it. Whitland. When Luke came out of the mountains into the Mark Twain Hotel at Jimtown and sought the court's mercy or whatever it was or the Judge there. He brought his family on the scene--Mrs. Lea and Overton and a baby in arms then. She has a nickname "Soupy". They called her. I can't now remember what her Christian name is, but I saw her only the other day. She's of course, a middle aged woman now. She's married to a dentist or a doctor. I've talked with her. She came to see me here about a year ago about that instance. She of course, doesn't remember it. She, as I said, was a babe in arms, but she was there. She was part of what you would call his sentimental appeal to the public--had his family with him--to appeal for sympathy.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember what year he went to prison?
 Luke Lea? Would that have been during Hill McAlister's service as governor?

MR. CHENEY: I think it was later than that. No, I'm not too sure. Thirty-four and I didn't cover that trial in Asheville. I'm a little, but I, let's see. I can't come up with it. It may have been anywhere between '34 and '36, somewhere along in there.

[INTERVIEW # IV WITH MR. BRAINARD CHENEY BY DR. CHARLES CRAWFORD.]

DR. CRAWFORD: Of course, Hill McAlister left office after the election of '36.

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What years were you with Senator Tom Stewart?

MR. CHENEY: Forty-three through '45. Let's see, that's right. The election would have been '42 and I think I went to Washington on New Year's Day of '43, '44, '45. I left him in the fall of '45.

DR. CRAWFORD: Then he (Luke Lea) still had influence during the administration of Hill McAlister?

MR. CHENEY: Well of course, the paper, let's see, Silliman Evans took it over about that time and Lea was out of the picture after he went to the pen. I'll tell you this. He had some influence after he got out of the pen. The then District Attorney General who had been a Lea man at one time ran for Congress. There were three candidates--Carlton Loser, Dick Atkins--that's who I was trying to think of and Will Cheek. The old man House was the mayor.

DR. CRAWFORD: Hillary House?

MR. CHENEY: Hillary House and he screwed things up by first giving his support to Carlton. That's where it rightfully should have been and then he was persuaded to shift in part to Will Cheek. I only have this by word of mouth, but Luke was back on the scene--quietly behind the scenes--advising Dick Atkinson and advising him shrewdly in the race and Dick won. I believe that Luke had considerable influence in that race as an advisor, but that is the only instance I know of of his being an influence on politics in the state. He was bereft--he wore the stripes--and he was bereft of any money or power. I don't think he exercised any. He tried to wear it gaily, but it was too much for him. Tom, one of his old captains from over there in Franklin, a lawyer (I'll think of his name in a minute) Tom told me--this was after Luke was out of prison and they were having a social gathering with two or three of his old friends and it just came up--somebody came up with a new suit on and was being admired and it was a striped suit and Luke said, "Yes, it is a handsome suit and I am an authority on stripes now.

That was the last of such remarks that I can quote on. I don't think that was too long before he died. It is hard to look back this long and have an accurate idea of the time, but I would say that he died certainly within five years after he got out of the pen.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know anything about what his relations were with Rogers Caldwell after he got out of prison? Do you know if the two were still friends?

MR. CHENEY: They were openly on friendly relations. I heard--by some of Roger's friends that he was

certainly strongly advised by his friends not to go near Luke or have anything to do with him. But I don't know what Rogers did or how he treated him. He was a lot luckier than Luke and of course, there were a good many of Roger's friends that felt that he (Rogers) just got too close to the "tarbaby" and got tarred and was blamed really. I am not quite that charitable. He was luckier. You know that mansion where he lived which I believe now is owned by the state, isn't it? He lived there without paying any taxes for many years. He lived on it. When they finally got down to it, they found that he didn't have title to the land and the old man had title and the state could never [claim it]. He continued to live there for many years after he had gone bankrupt and everything because of that was a peculiar situation. There was a long court proceeding to the title to the house and so forth and I think he got to the point that he didn't want to live there any longer. It was too expensive a place to keep up. He finally departed and lived some where else. I think Rogers salvaged money out of his situation, but I don't think Luke did.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know what his son, Little Luke, did later?

MR. CHENEY: That's a good question. No, and I never have known anybody that did know it. Luke continued to operate in that shadowy realm that his father had brought him into and he in a general way vaguely operated as a kind of broker and I have had a good many of my acquaintances to say, "Do you know what Little Luke is doing?"

And nobody that I'd ever known knew exactly what he was doing. He

owned a farm--right nice place--for some years out where he lived. I was out there a couple of times--a nice place, but he lost it. Now what the terms of it were and how long or what kind of equity he had in it I just don't know. I see him around occasionally just very casually, but I don't know. Luke married his secretary after he got out of the pen. She was a Catholic and went to the church I belong to, and Luke joined the Catholic Church. We belonged to a little club together for awhile called "The Sarah Club, a Catholic layman's club. I used to see him very casually. He then divorced his wife and remarried someone. I haven't seen him in a long time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Would she be the one living now in Nashville?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I would think so. I never met his present wife.

DR. CRAWFORD: How many times was he married altogether?

MR. CHENEY: Twice I think. I don't think he had been married when he married this secretary.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was Luke Lea used in any way against Governor Hill McAlister in his campaigns?

MR. CHENEY: No. There was Lou Pope in that race and there were people who were charging Pope was a Lea man and under Lea some, but I didn't figure that had much weight.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was really not in a position, Luke Lea wasn't, to be active in the McAlister Administration, was he?

MR. CHENEY: No. I'll have to get my Blue Books out and see if I can clarify in that second campaign.

DR. CRAWFORD: That's Hill McAlister's in '34?

MR. CHENEY: Uh-huh. I think that the. . . (pause)

DR. CRAWFORD: When did Ham Patterson get in a race?

MR. CHENEY: I believe it was the '34 race. He'd been out of politics a long time and he was a judge down there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, he was a judge in Memphis at that time I believe.

MR. CHENEY: They induced him to come up here and he ran. He didn't make much of a race.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know what support he had?

MR. CHENEY: He didn't make much of a showing really. It was sad--this was gossip--that they gave him \$10,000 to get into the race. They--it seems to me Luke was in on that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Even in '34?

MR. CHENEY: I must be wrong about that, but that's my vague recollection of it. It was only heresay but he did take part in that race. I don't know where my Blue Books have gotten to. I thought I could lay my hand on one or two of them. The only one I could find is much later--Frank Clement.

DR. CRAWFORD: What about the election of 1936 when Gordon Browning was elected the first time? Did you cover that one?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, I covered that one all right. That was a very remarkable race. The Commissioner or heir apparent from East Tennessee to succeed. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: To Hill McAlister?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, to succeed. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was the heir apparent to Hill McAlister?

MR. CHENEY: What I was speaking of was the State Attorney General at the time that Hill [was in] was Roy Beeler. But he was not in the gubernatorial race. He was the man who gave that opinion about this sales tax law that didn't hold up.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did you think he was the heir apparent?

MR. CHENEY: Well, I am trying to get to the heir apparent. I can't think of his name.

MRS. CHENEY: Could it have been Prentice Cooper?

MR. CHENEY: No, Prentice came on the scene a little later. Prentice had the good fortune of being in Crump's graces all the time. Crump made him governor three terms. Most unpopular man that ever sat in the chair. In '34 Lou Pope was in there again and Malcolm R. Patterson which was Ham and Hill.

DR. CRAWFORD: He came back again?

MR. CHENEY: That was the '34 race and Patterson only got 58,000 votes, but it was close between McAlister and Pope--pretty close. McAlister - 116,000 and Pope - 106,000 just 10,000 vote [difference]. It was a hot race. No, that was the '32 race!

DR. CRAWFORD: It [was] the '32 race with Hill McAlister's first.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, I knew that Pope was. . .Pope tried to contest it and threatened to run independent, but didn't. That was right, he didn't.

DR. CRAWFORD: In the general election?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, general election. Now the '34 race must have been more cut and dried. I don't believe it was a close race. I don't know offhand much about it now. I can't lay hand on anything in the way of an instance.

DR. CRAWFORD: But you remember the 1936 Gordon Browning first race?

MR. CHENEY: I am trying to come up with a man's name. I thought I had it. That's one of the worst things. I thought it would come to me. I'll give you the name before it is over with, but it was assumed that he had support--the man whose name I can't recall at the moment.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he a college president?

MR. CHENEY: He was later. He had support both of Crump and he had ours (The Banner) for it. This is a very famous race in the minds of politics writers. Browning was still, of course, known as Captain Browning and in Memphis his top sergeant was. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that Abe Waldauer?

MR. CHENEY: Named Abe Waldauer. Abe was very loyal to his friend and former captain, Gordon Browning.

That campaign began with the assumption that the candidate whose name I cannot recall was in the lead. And it was assumed that Crump was for him. McKellar made some public statement at that time in support of this man. [Burgin Dossett]

DR. CRAWFORD: I remember the one you mean, but I can't think

of his name either. I think of him more as the president of Tennessee Tech.

MR. CHENEY: And it will come to me--it's terrible I can't think of his name. As the campaign moved along and Crump didn't say anything the newspapermen began to speculate, or just to take notice of it. Joe Hatcher played a very important role in this. He in his column began to say that the word is in Memphis that Browning has support in the Memphis machine. They hadn't made up their minds over there. He began this and it built up oh for three or four weeks--speculation--it became in political ranks a state-wide obsession--people who were interested in it.

DR. CRAWFORD: What Boss Crump was really going to do?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, what Boss Crump was really going to do. Hatcher handled it very very well. It became assumed that whoever Crump put his hand on would be the next governor. Our candidate and friend began to get a little shakey yet we had every right to assume that he was the candidate of the organization. This went on up until about two weeks before the election and Crump came out and endorsed Gordon Browning and the other man's campaign just collapsed.

DR. CRAWFORD: Despite the fact that he had McKellar's endorsement and the Banners?

MR. CHENEY: McKellar backtracked and I was a part of that. He consulted me. He came down here prepared to endorse the man and just didn't do it. He got scared. He didn't do anything. This was after Crump had announced and he asked me, "Do

you think it would do any good for [Burgin Dossett]."

And I said, "No, I don't think it would. I don't think a d--- thing you could say or do would change it." And so he didn't do it. It was a remarkable campaign. It had some headquarters closed. They had a hard time staying in the game. It was the greatest psychological stroke I ever saw or knew about in a campaign that Crump's announcement just practically called the election. And that was two weeks before it actually happened. Now what the vote actually was I don't know, but it was a sweeping vote.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, I think Shelby County gave 60,000 votes to Browning.

MRS. CHENEY: It wasn't John Maddux, was it?

MR. CHENEY: No, it wasn't John Maddux. It began with a "D" I believe.

DR. CRAWFORD: I was inclined to think that was Derryberry. That was not the one?

MR. CHENEY: The name was not Derryberry. And I don't believe it was Middle Tennessee but it was East Tennessee that he was president of some East Tennessee University. Think of who has been up there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, I was thinking of Derryberry who was president of Tennessee Tech.

MR. CHENEY: I remember Derryberry, but it wasn't Derryberry. He was for a time he had a federal job.

DR. CRAWFORD: We will think of him later I am sure. Do you know why Mr. Crump gave his support to Gordon

Browning in 1936?

MR. CHENEY: It was believed and I think this might have been somewhat of a fabrication of Hatcher's (Joe Hatcher), but I think there was some truth in it. [There was] tension between McKellar and Crump and this was an element in it. McKellar had assumed the ascendancy in this and went out and got himself committed and the old man didn't like it. Now I think, Hatcher said that, and I know enough about it to believe that there was some merit in that, but there was more than that. Old Mr. Waldauer down there--Abe--was a wheel in the machine.

DR. CRAWFORD: Abe Waldauer.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, he was very enthusiastic for Gordon there. His old commander and he made an all out campaign in the organization and I think that he persuaded old man Crump that he had considerable influence in it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Abe Waldauer's influence was very important then?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Gordon had a war record and was popular and he hadn't been close enough to Lea to ruin him. He was one of Lea's commanders, but then that was a military situation. While it didn't. . .the honeymoon lasted very briefly. . .old man Crump picked him up.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was Hill McAlister's position in that campaign?

MR. CHENEY: I don't think he was active. He felt at that time--you see, at that time they had had this

gas tank scandal and I think he sort of bowed out of it-- that his influence would be questionable. He was quiet and didn't say anything.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you know what he did after he left the governor's office?

MR. CHENEY: Not too long after that he was appointed to a federal bankrupt court--what do you call it?

DR. CRAWFORD: Federal Bankrupt Judge.

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: I am sure in the Thirties they had a lot of business.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, a lot of business. I think he retained that position until he retired or maybe his death.

DR. CRAWFORD: Let me ask about Governor McAlister's position toward the federal government? I know a great deal of the spending in Tennessee then was not state money, which was in short supply. It was federal with all the New Deal programs. Did he get much credit for any of that?

MR. CHENEY: McAlister? He had to in a way. The early predecessor of WPA came through the Legislature.

The Legislature was brought into it and hence the Governor. I'm not firm about that early structure, but that preceeded the federal structure, you know that came later. Of course, the blue eagle. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: The NRA.

MR. CHENEY: The NRA was in effect there for awhile before the court knocked it out.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well that helped his administration then, didn't it? Having the federal money in the state?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I think his second administration had some.

DR. CRAWFORD: Of course, they really weren't steady until his second. . .

MR. CHENEY: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was his attitude toward TVA? McKellar was for TVA vigorously?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. At the beginning. I think he had some kind of a squabble with Estes Kefauver and later a policy matter in later years. I don't know too much about that. I wasn't here then. He was a champion of TVA in those early periods I know. I can't remember any public statements that McAlister made. I just don't have any impressions on it as whether it was an issue.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suspect they were all publicly in favor of TVA.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, that was general.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know anything about the relationship between Crump and McKellar by this time--the middle Thirties?

MR. CHENEY: Of course, there was that strange situation over Browning. But old McKellar folded and got out of the picture. I was a witness to that. He wasn't going to get in any squabble about this gubernatorial candidate.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you feel that Mr. Crump was clearly stronger

than McKellar by this time?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. The Crump organization was the most powerful political organization I had any experience with. They worked at it down there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why do you think it was so successful? What was there about its operation?

MR. CHENEY: They had good organization. That's a good question. I've have speculated on that some of course. They organized and influenced opinion in that town. There has probably never been another political organization in this country as powerful and as long-lived as the Crump organization. It has some merits about it. Crump, after all even his worst enemies (I might say some of these worst things were said in print because of campaigning of the time) but you had to respect him for his honesty. People in Memphis believed in him, though Crump indirectly profited by his influence and position. After 1915 when he was ousted as mayor he never held another public office. His control was essentially moral sway. Of course, he had an organization around him, but he didn't have any legal power over them. He was very strict about boys who worked with his crowd had to keep their hands out of the till. I saw this happen. We had a delegation leader--state senator--fine looking fellow, popular--Scott Fitzhugh--[from] an old family. Scott took a \$5,000 handout from the theater people (I don't know what the deal was now).

DR. CRAWFORD: Some bill concerning theater interests?

MR. CHENEY: Crump made him resign as Speaker of the Senate. I sat in on that. They believed in him down

there. They had some sharp pencil guys who could count the vote right. Here's a historical thing that I don't know whether it's been said in print or not, but I believe in it. Memphis is a peculiar city. It's there on the (State) line. One thing that was remarkable was few people (small percentage) were born there. Maybe as much as two-thirds of the people came out of Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, and didn't have any inherited prejudices about Tennessee politics and [were] willing to let the old man tell them what they ought to do--or what was good for Memphis. That's the way it was pictured down there. It was a peculiar situation. I don't know any one man who has held as much personal power in matters of politics as Crump did, just because it was him. Memphis was peculiar. They had this attitude of they were just barely in the state anyhow and he could tell them what was best for Memphis--he and his organization. I've had prominent men argue for old man Crump and they had that spirit--"He's for us and we're for him." Lawyers, businessmen.

DR. CRAWFORD: How powerful was he outside of Shelby County?

MR. CHENEY: Well that of course, is the \$60,000 question?

 The vote down there! (Laughter) He could [make it] practically impossible to offset the Memphis vote. Particularly from Hill McAlister's day on to the time of Estes Kefauver. Now Estes would never have won that election if old man Crump hadn't gone crazy and split his vote. I was out of the state by that time.

 See, the old man was up in his eighties by then. He had been running the state for ten years I guess. There were the three terms of Cooper, and then Jim McCord and I don't know exactly what happened

about. . .it was over Tom Stewart. After I left him, I guess it was September of '45, a boy name Fats Everett succeeded me up there. I heard that Prentice, who didn't like Tom too well wanted to succeed to the Senate. And he was pretty close to Crump. And that Willie Gerber had a low opinion of Tom--something happened in there--then Tom didn't have a war record anyhow.

DR. CRAWFORD: And Mr. Crump thought a lot of that--the war record.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, I always believed it was around Prentice that they formed this clique in there to oppose Tom. I attributed a lot of it to Willie Berber that he convinced the old man to drop Tom. Well, Stewart had been in there ten years and he wasn't going to be dropped that way. That was bad judgement and they split the support. Up until that time Crump was certainly running the state.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was 1948?

MR. CHENEY: '48.

DR. CRAWFORD: When Crump gave his support to Mitchell?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. Mitchell didn't make much of a [showing]. I wasn't in the state at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where were you, sir?

MR. CHENEY: I was writing a novel down on St. Simon's Island. Trying to! I did come up here at one time. It was obvious that I couldn't do anything for Tom. I said, "There's only one thing you can do. If you don't manage to talk some sense into Crump, you are going to lose if this goes on."

There wasn't anybody that could convince Crump it seems. When I was with Tom I talked to the old man once a week.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Crump?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. There were two or three things he was especially interested in: One was the freight rate--southern freight rates. He had gotten Tom appointed as chairman of the Southern Caucus on it.

DR. CRAWFORD: How was he able to do that?

MR. CHENEY: I don't know, I suppose McKellar. McKellar was powerful in the Senate of course. Tom had stepped out some and made some reputation for himself. I was his secretary then you know. (Laughter) In fact I handled the booking on that. That's a secretary's job. I ran the office. I ran the organization where you have to keep up with what, do all the calling and putting things together and so forth. And as I said I reported to old man Crump weekly what the situation was on it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, you talked to Mr. Crump, not Senator Stewart? I mean you were the one who reported, not the Senator?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, not that the Senator didn't. I kept the books so to speak and I called him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you sense that Mr. Crump had lost support for Senator Stewart?

MR. CHENEY: No, I didn't. I thought we were in [good] shape when I left. I don't know when it developed.

It was after--I feel like it was after I left. I don't know.

DR. CRAWFORD: There was no question that Will Gerber had a lot of influence over Crump. Did you ever talk with Will Gerber?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I did talk with Willie. Not after this developed. I talked to him frequently. Of course, he wouldn't say anything to me, but I didn't know of anything he had said against Tom at that time. I always suspected Prentice. Prentice was a selfish, cold-blooded, cranky, ungenerous fellow and hard to get along with. He offered me a job with him. He wanted me to be in his cabinet. I wasn't about to get in it. I was as close to Prentice as I wanted to get.

DR. CRAWFORD: Some people had severe arguments with him I know. Almost had fights with him.

MR. CHENEY: His Commissioner of Agriculture threatened to mop up the floor with him one day in a family session. What was that boy's name--he was a farmer down there out of Waverly. A nice boy. Yes, it was said that Prentice insulted more men than anybody that ever had occupied the governor's chair. (Laughter) But he was aggressively honest, that was one thing about it. He didn't permit any monkey business around him if he had any suspicion of it. Old man Crump believed in his honesty. I think that was the reason he backed him as strong as he did.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know the cause of the break between Mr. Crump and Gordon Browning after the '36 election?

MR. CHENEY: Well, it was said to have been over Lou Pope.

but I don't have it too well in mind. Anyhow it had a fractional denomination of population basis.

What they hadn't figured on--they couldn't say just Shelby County and Davidson County. They had to make a formula that was general. And what they hadn't figured on was--all right--they were admitted enemies of Shelby County/Davidson County organization. It was against them and they were afraid finally. As it worked out there would be seven or eight other counties--populous counties--that would be affected by it too. This was what the trouble [was]. I went around the state writing stories about it--what it would do for each county. We developed, I've forgotten how many counties, but a very considerable number of important counties that would also suffer from it. They had a lot of money and they rode roughshod. They bought some votes there. I'm talking about Gordon Browning. It was more openhanded bribery that went on in that session than any I was ever appointed to. As a matter of fact, I published a big story. It got the Banner in a \$25,000 libel suit. That was a lot of money then, but we won it without any trouble. I had an affidavit and I knew we were safe. They had the votes to put the law over and did as you know. But the Supreme Court took it out before the year was out.

DR. CRAWFORD: How was Gordon Browning able to get the votes to do that with Mr. Crump opposed?

MR. CHENEY: Well, there was a lot of money passed, and political favors and whatnot. I think he probably convinced enough politicians in the state that, "put this over and we will castrate Shelby", and they would have nothing to defend. This

would be the end of the machine down there. That was certainly in the scales.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were the Gordon Browning forces passing the money?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, they were. I don't know that Governor Browning had his hands on anything--his legislative leaders and his brother and other men. I don't have any evidence, but it was his reputation that his brother, who was Commissioner of Education, was crooked as a snake.

DR. CRAWFORD: Governor Browning's brother?

MR. CHENEY: What was his name?

DR. CRAWFORD: I don't remember sir.

MR. CHENEY: He was what you call a "money politician."

DR. CRAWFORD: Now Gordon Browning knew that this would turn Mr. Crump against him in the next election, didn't he?

MR. CHENEY: Oh yes. I always personally liked Gordon. He was an amiable, generous sort of fellow. I'll tell this--it's a trivial thing, but I think it is indicative of the man. Of course, we (The Banner) were against him tooth and toenail on this. He had two extra sessions that year, and it was pretty bitter. But our personal relations always remained amiable. I think it came in the fall and the year was about to run out and I hadn't had a vacation. I'd been covering extra sessions all the time. It (My vacation) came up and I didn't want to get out of town and have to come back so I called him and said, "Look Governor, it's my vacation coming up next

week and I don't want to get out of town and have to turn right around and come back, and are you going to have an extra session? You want to tell me that?"

He said, "You stay in town." (Laughter) He knew I wasn't going to take advantage of him and I didn't. I didn't tell anybody else. He was a likeable person.

THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THIS PROJECT IS "RECENT POLITICAL HISTORY OF TENNESSEE." THE PLACE IS SMYRNA, TENNESSEE. THE DATE IS NOVEMBER 7, 1981. THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. BRAINARD CHENEY AND THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEW #5.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Cheney, I'd like to begin talking about the Tennessee gubernatorial election of 1938 when Gordon Browning after one 2-year term in office had his next campaign. What were you doing at that time? You were reporting state politics?

MR. CHENEY: I was covering state politics for the Nashville Banner. I guess that was my full commitment at that time. There had been some action in the courts. It affected Browning's second race. He had tried to put through the Legislature a bill called (the basis of it is) County Unit Law. The Democratic Party was to be reorganized so that its nomination would not be made directly by popular vote, but each county was assigned a certain representation--so many units or so many votes. The county was a voting unit separately and whatever the popular vote in the county might be the majority would be empowered to vote the assigned number of votes assigned to that county.

[It was] patterned on such a law that the Georgia Democratic

Party had. It was charged and--I don't think successfully denied by the Browning forces--I don't think they made any elaborate effort to deny it--that this was the purpose. I am sure they paid homage to the rural representation or something of a sort. But it was aimed at generally and believed certainly by the organizations of the counties of Davidson where Nashville was located and Shelby where Memphis was located as being special legislation directed at them. The effect of the bill on them [was] to reduce their legislative representation very radically. That is, their party representation and the affairs of the Democratic Party would (I've forgotten the exact amount that Davidson County had with perhaps 60,000 votes being cast, most of them Democratic) have maybe 8 votes--maybe Shelby County something in proportion--and this had the effect of reducing very radically the representation of the party.

Well, the only thing in making the law have some generalization of form so that it could be legal[was] they had set up a general formula of representation. They had in mind increasing the power and influence and the vote of the rural counties at the expense of Memphis and Nashville.

But we discovered when we worked over the law and analyzed it, that it was going to take votes away from some other large counties that were not so big. I will roughly say that there may have been as many as ten or twelve other counties who had some importance themselves. Montgomery was one. Of course, there was Knox and Hamilton. And Sul-

livan was one, and was always a Democratic county up there. Several counties over the state.

I had spent some time during the year running a series of articles on each of these counties to show what had been taken away from them. It worked up considerable organized popular sentiment against the law and against Browning as a consequence.

We'll have to check but I think it is true that the Supreme Court didn't wait very long. They had a hearing on the case. I'm sure that our factions, I would say, since I was on the Banner then, which were openly against Browning. The Supreme Court had a hearing and declared the law unconstitutional. This left Browning very vulnerable at that time in the campaign. He not only didn't have control of the law he put through that would have helped him, but he had been overturned by the court and he was clearly in not only a political but a moral situation of a handicap.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did the Banner oppose Browning?

MR. CHENEY: Well, the Banner always felt like it was shadowy but had some bearing. Luke Lea, of course, had owned the Tennessean, but didn't at that time. The Tennessean was against the Banner. They always opposed each other. It was a very rare accident that they agreed on anything. Browning had been a Lea man. He had been a captain in Lea's regiment and then had been pretty generally a Lea man in politics. He still had some of that smell for the Banner; and they remained mute I think, in that first campaign of '36 after Crump came out for him. It practically collapsed the campaign of [Burgin Dossett]. We supported the opposition whose name was Burgin Dossett.

Yes, we supported Burgin, but there wasn't much action after Crump's [announcement]. So when the first legislative session came on, we were not very partisan to begin with, but before the session was over we were. As a matter of fact I believe I had \$25,000 libel suit, which was quite a lot of money then slapped on me and the Banner about the story I wrote about the Browning leader from Knoxville.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was it that sued you?

MR. CHENEY: He was head of the Knoxville delegation.

DR. CRAWFORD: In the Legislature?

MR. CHENEY: In the Legislature. There was a story going out. I carried a story--a statement by a man who charged this man with buying votes. I had it in the form of an affidavit. Well, and considerable substantiation and he had to file a libel suit you know. I didn't think he was ever going to win it. He didn't get much consideration from the courts. But we were never very friendly toward Browning. I don't mean there was anything personal in it. I got along with him. I liked him personally.

Of course, he only had the one term at that time. I don't have any detailed recollection of that campaign, but my impression of it is, we felt, certainly on our side, that Browning didn't have much chance of being elected. Popular sentiment in the state was pretty outspoken.

DR. CRAWFORD: Because of the County Unit Bill?

MR. CHENEY: Mainly because of that. Of course, the Crump machine had vituperatively turned against him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know where the county unit bill came from? Who introduced this? Who came up with this idea?

MR. CHENEY: Well, it was bruited--I never talked to them much--that it was the brain child of Lou Pope, who was not in the Legislature. But Lou was friendly with Browning and Browning had a great deal of respect for Lou's political acumen and knowledge. That was really hearsay--grapevine and so forth of a newspaperman. It was introduced, of course, by--I'll have to check who did introduce it. I think it bore a number of signatures--Browning's floor leaders.

DR. CRAWFORD: Browning definitely supported it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he definitely supported it. I'll have to say that it was pretty high-handed in their dealings with the Legislature. And there was a lot of buying of votes. I only ran down one deal that I could expose, but that was heresay--the grapevine all around.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suppose you would hear when people buying votes?

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Proving it might have been the problem?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, proving it was the problem.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did the Crump machine oppose it immediately after its introduction?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, Crump had already broken with Browning.

DR. CRAWFORD: Before it was introduced?

MR. CHENEY: Before it was introduced, yes. There was some, it seemed, rather incidental business between Browning and Crump, I believe over an appointee.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suppose Mr. Crump wanted a voice in who was appointed, didn't he?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he expected it and didn't get it. And it came up pretty soon in the Browning administration (I'll have to review the papers for what was said there). I believe Browning said that he hadn't expected to be able to get along with Crump. I know he said that later. There was kind of a sentimental issue involved. Abe Waldaur had been Browning's top sergeant, I believe.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, I think he had. Browning was an artillery captain I believe. Abe Waldaur, was then an attorney in Memphis.

MR. CHENEY: Attorney in Memphis and part of the machine. It was reported that Abe was instrumental in persuading the old man's support of Browning. Of course, there were other factors. I think that there may have been that Crump may have had a somewhat negative reaction to Burgin, but there was this incidental thing that was hard to weigh, but I think it was in there. This is, of course, a rumor, but it had some basis and some fact and signs in there at the time. I don't know whether I can recall it, it was one of the things that old Joe Hatcher always harped on. I don't know whether it had any fact behind it or not, but it was good propaganda.

The old man Crump felt that K.D. McKellar was getting too big

for his britches and taking over the power. K.D. had appointed Burgin. I think that Burgin had some special relation and I think he had a Federal job and I know he had one later, but I think he had a job at the time before he ran and that McKellar came out early in support of him.

Everybody assumed for awhile that McKellar was speaking for Crump too. I think that there was an element of that--uneasy egos in the bed together too big you know--old man Crump figured that he would take McKellar down too while he was at it. He may have had other reasons, and I am sure he did, but this allegedly figured into it and is was effectively done. Because he took the wind out of the old man's sails all right.

I had this first hand, when Crump finally came out for Browning, McKellar was put in an embarrassing position and he had already made a speech for Dossett as I remember. I know he made a statement. We had a little session at which I was a party. I have forgotten where we had it. Some lawyers's office here in Nashville. For the old man, [McKellar] of course, the issue was, was he going to continue his support and make a rip-roaring statement about it?

DR. CRAWFORD: There was a meeting with McKellar?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. And he said, "Should I make this statement?" He put the question to me among others.

I said realistically, "Aside from the sentiments in this, you can't do Burgin any good and you can do yourself a whole lot of harm." I said, "I don't think its called for," There seemed to be some agree-

ment about this and the old man didn't issue the statement.

DR. CRAWFORD: So he took no real part in the campaign
after that?

MR. CHENEY: After Crump came out.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, I have heard from the son of one
McKellar's supporters that that was basic-
ally true. That Mr. Crump wanted to publicly make it clear that he
was in charge rather than McKellar.

MR. CHENEY: Humiliate the old [Senator]. I think
it was evident. Joe(Hatcher) made the
most of it, and well, I heard enough of it from my own side to believe
that that simplified it. The old man sure backed down on Burgin. I
never saw in my knowledge of politics, no man ever collapsed a cam-
paign more completely than Crump did that Burgin Dossett campaign.
All he had to do was come out.. It almost closed down his headquarters.
It did close down headquarters in a lot of the rural counties.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, I think as I remember the story,
in Kenneth McKellar's own precinct almost
everyone voted for Browning, not for Dossett.

MR. CHENEY: (Chuckle) Yeah. I guess that's true,
I wouldn't doubt it. Now, the tide was
running very strongly the other way of course by the time Browning had
to face reelection. There were a lot of people who were not very deep-
ly involved in politics that had come to the conclusion that this s.o.b.

in the governor's chair was trying to do something to disenfranchise people in the state. It took some temerity to run the second race. There was a lot of expression. A lot of county papers came out editorially you know. Things like that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, actually his plan would have benefitted the smaller counties in general, wouldn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, in a certain level. I've known that once. Yeah, the smaller counties -- the real small ones. I don't know what the feeling was. They may have felt like it was all right, but generally speaking there was considerable noise over the state over this shenanigans piece.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you think that was the major factor in Browning's defeat in '38?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, that plus strategy. The Crump Machine was very much against him. They had been for him before. He rode in in great triumph before, but poor Dossett had just a handful of votes at the end of the race. They had a hard time keeping the headquarters open in Nashville.

DR. CRAWFORD: What kind of support did Dossett get?

MR. CHENEY: I would say that Browning must have beaten him 2 and 1/2 or 3 votes to 1. Of course, voting patterns are a pretty stable thing ordinarily and traditionally. But I think it was at least 2 1/2 to 1. You can sure

check my figures on that easily enough. That's my recollection of it. Of course, Prentice (Cooper) was never recognized as a great campaigner, yet there were people who thought he was pretty effective.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know why he was selected or how in 1938?

MR. CHENEY: Not quite. I was covering the Senate in the Legislature. Prentice, I guess, was perhaps the principal leader of "our side". I was used to thinking of it as our side. That included the Crump machine and the Davidson County machine and most of the large counties that were Democratic-ally controlled counties.

I do remember this little personal instance that has no political significance except maybe as a reflection. Prentice was not what you called a prepossessing type of politician. He was as much of a runt as I am. He wasn't any taller than I am, a little bit more beaten down and he had sort of a lean and acidulous manner about him. This was a common piece of instance with me, but I remember that he had worked closely with me in those days and he called me up to his room in the Hermitage Hotel. And he said, "Have you heard any talk about me?"

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "Well, any suggestions of me running for governor?"

I was (chuckle)taken by it. I tried to cover up my look and I looked over his shoulder and I thought, "Well, for G--'s sake I

knew that every man here was subject to the disease called Governoritis, but you're one of them that'll never break out with the disease."

(Laughter) Well, anyhow he just seemed to me to be the last man with potentials for a gubernatorial candidate.

DR. CRAWFORD: You mean he seemed to lack the public appearance?

MR. CHENEY: Oh yes, his appearance and his whole manner. He wasn't dumb, but he was dry and a little bit nasal and complaining. He was petulant almost, but complaining and even then a little erratic. There were stories going around about the parrot that he [had]. He had a pet parrot that was not according to Hoyle for a politician! (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: He kept a pet parrot?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, Laura.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was the parrot's name?

MR. CHENEY: Laura.

DR. CRAWFORD: Laura! That doesn't seem typical for a Tennessee politician! (Laughter)

MR. CHENEY: Well not typical. A contrast between him and his father, [who] was a hardy, fine looking old man, who everybody liked a whole lot better than they did the son. But the campaign got under way and let's see two or three things happened along in the spring. One, Memphis and Crump decided that he would try to go with a Memphis man. They had a man

who was impeccable and popular in a general way--respected--he was at that time in Congress.

DR. CRAWFORD: Would that have been Walter Chandler?

MR. CHENEY: Walter Chandler. They announced Walter Chandler. Then in the meantime, Prentice announced. He may have announced even before Walter earlier. Now there were two or three maybe that announced. Then they put old Roxie to make a convass through the organization of the state.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now who did this?

MR. CHENEY: Mr. Roxie Rice. You know I have forgotten his real name, but we always called him "Roxie". And they came to the conclusion that Chandler couldn't win. There was prejudice against having a man from Memphis.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, Mr. Crump did not usually put up a Memphis candidate. He had Memphis anyway.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, he had Memphis anyway. They never had run anybody and there had been nobody in the governorship since Ham Patterson which was ancient history. They decided they had better pull him and the old man was looking around and there were no more eligible that they had for it than Prentice. He had been floor leader for the faction.

DR. CRAWFORD: You mean in the Legislature?

MR. CHENEY: In the Legislature.

DR. CRAWFORD: Had he also been to Congress?

MR. CHENEY: No, Prentice hadn't been in Congress.

The old man just put his hand on his shoulder, and that made him. The state kept him in there for three terms. (Laughter) Well, the whole story of course, was that old man Crump decided that he liked Prentice after he got him in there. Prentice knew which side his bread was buttered on. But one thing about it, I'd have to say this, he was aggressively honest. It wasn't any question about it, there wasn't any question--it was personal--he didn't have any d--- roques around him. If he suspected them, he would kick them out. He'd roll them in there quick. Just mean as h--- about it all the time! But it tended to keep things straight and he developed a reputation for it. As it was said humorously at the time, no man had occupied the governor's chair that had insulted as many people as had Governor Cooper. (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: How do you mean he had insulted people?

MR. CHENEY: Well, he was irritable and not polite at times to people and if he thought you had an idea to do him [in] about something he [didn't] mince any bones about it, he told you. (Laughter)

He had a streak in him. Now here's a little story that I think represents Prentice and his kind of irritable, mean nature. My friend, whom I was very fond then and forever was Hilton Butler. Prentice incidentally offered me a job, and I wouldn't take it. I was just as near to him as I wanted to get. Prentice made him Commissioner of Safety, I believe they call it. He became because I guess he had been doing

some writing during the campaign, Prentice's chief speech writer. Soon after, it was early in his administration, he wrote a speech for Prentice under order for some occasion and Prentice called him into his office and got the speech out and looked it over and said, "Well, (he had a hateful way of talking) there are two lines in this speech that are good." He read the opening line and then he read the last line and threw it in the waste basket. (Laughter) H---, I would have left him!

DR. CRAWFORD: Is Hilton Butler still living?

MR. CHENEY: No, he's dead, poor boy. He was always a little eccentric. Very bright and very knowledgeable in politics. I didn't really know this until after it happened. I couldn't run him down. He had just retired into his shell at his apartment house out there in the old Robert E. Lee and didn't see anybody and wouldn't see anybody. It turned out that he had a cancer and when he found out that was what he had, he lived with it awhile and then he committed suicide. But he just broke his friendships gradually from all his friends and acquaintances practically. He remained in government several years and served in two or three administrations as commissioner. He was in Prentice's for three terms and then he was in McCord's, and he was certainly in Frank Clement's and he hung around longer than anybody I know. I think he was still some sort of commissioner when cancer took him out.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, was this behavior of Prentice Cooper's with him exceptional?

MR. CHENEY: Do you mean exceptional with Prentice?

It was characteristic! (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know any other accounts specifically?

MR. CHENEY: I wasn't on hand for this one either. I can't give you all the details it ought to have, but he had among those in his cabinet, it was told to me by a cabinet member, a wealthy, well-to-do farmer from down there in Humphreys County at Waverly who was his Commissioner of Agriculture. His name won't come to me right now. It will be in the book.[Blue Book] He was a likeable man. I remember him. I knew him. He and Prentice not only knew each other politically but were classmates at Vanderbilt. [They] had known each other pretty well and of course, this fellow wasn't taking any lip off of Prentice and Prentice could be so nagging and all and he always misinterpreted in the worst way and mentioned your frailties and things like that. I don't know what the substance of this was. I got it third handed but any how, Prentice had been nagging at this fellow and jowling at him and it went on until he got furious in a cabinet meeting. He said, "G-- d--- y-- Prentice, you say that to me again and I'll sweep you a-- up off the floor." Prentice sort of backed down and grinned. He had infuriated him. He didn't fire him either. It's terrible I can't think of his name.

DR. CRAWFORD: It will be in the Blue Book.

That's exceptional that anyone with such an insulting personality. . . .

MR. CHENEY: Could remain governor three terms.

DR. CRAWFORD: But of course, do you think he ever insulted Mr. Crump?

MR. CHENEY: Oh no! He had better judgment than that! He looked after Mr. Crump. He was real forceful beforehand I understand in anticipating anything Mr. Crump might be interested in.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was sort of a case of his being able to insult anyone in the state as long as he didn't insult Mr. Crump!

MR. CHENEY: I think so. (Laughter) When he won, this was one little bet, it was sorta like at the end of the campaign. It was sort of like a triumphal tour. Everbody knew that he was going to sweep the state. There were half a dozen newspapermen in Shelbyville. He invited us in the house to have a drink, I guess. He was showing and being familiar and hospitable with them and I was the one closest to him at the Banner--spokesman. Anyhow he had gone in the house and he called me in there and I went in there. I have forgotten what it was, and we were talking and he started back out to this room full of newspapermen and he had this d--- parrot of his. I said, "For G--'s sake Prentice, get that bird out of here. These newspapermen will ruin you." He was a little queer. He talked to the bird all the time. This was not in accord with the popular notion of a political candidate!

DR. CRAWFORD: You mean he carried the bird around on his arm and talked to it?

MR. CHENEY: On his arm and talked to it. Laura became known in politics of state after that mostly by heresay and comment. But at that time I knew he'd walk in there with this bird on his arm and these kind of newspapermen and they'd ruin him!

DR. CRAWFORD: People around the state generally learned about Laura anyway.

MR. CHENEY: Oh yes, it got out. He as far as I know had the good sense not to appear in public with her with any relationship. . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, a coon dog would have been much more appropriate!

MR. CHENEY: Oh yes. He could have had a coon dog, but a parrot on his shoulder!

DR. CRAWFORD: Then after the election Prentice Cooper organized his cabinet. What sort of government did he put together?

MR. CHENEY: Of course, he had a good bit to choose from and there weren't many people against him at the time. He put in a pretty d--- good organization. One young man of later fame he put in there was Estes Kefauver. Estes did a d--- good job. I was very much taken with Estes I remember, when he came in as Commissioner of Finance and Taxation. As a matter of fact Estes didn't finish out the term. I believe old Sam D. McReynolds, the Congressman in Estes's district died and he ran.

DR. CRAWFORD: Chattanooga District?

MR. CHENEY: Chattanooga District. He only made it

for a time and he was, of course, a live bright fellow. Who else was in that cabinet? Of course, my friend Hilton was in it.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was an honest high class government?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I believe Burgin Dossett was in that cabinet too.

DR. CRAWFORD: He had probably supported Cooper after his defeat by Browning.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I am sure he had. He did take some active part in the campaign.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, he and Crump were on the same side then?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I don't think Burgin could afford to hold it against the old man Crump and Crump never held it against Burgin. Burgin was a sort of crusty East Tennessean, but a good sensible, responsible sort of man.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was a college president for awhile, wasn't he?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, and I think that may have come to him I am almost sure it came to him while Prentice was still in office and made him president up there in East Tennessee. What's it called now, University of East Tennessee?

DR. CRAWFORD: East Tennessee State University.

MR. CHENEY: I think George McCanless may have come in at that time. I believe he was in the Attorney General's office. Let me see who else was in that cabinet. John Harton may have been Prentice's manager. They are in the same

county and John was a mayor. John is sort of a promoter. He has done very well for himself. Prentice had reason to feel a little skeptical about him. It was said--this is two times talk--but something of a sort did happen. Harton got to be comptroller and Prentice demurred at first. He'd been his campaign manager, but he couldn't[be certain about him]. And he said, "John, all right I am going to let you come up here, but by G--,you start any of your monkey business I'll kick your a-- off quicker than anybody else."

DR. CRAWFORD: And that was John Horton?

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How was he related to former Governor Henry Horton?

MR. CHENEY: It's not the same name quite. H-A-R-T-O-N.

And the other one is Horton. He was a real estate man. He owned a hotel here and he owned the Monteagle Hotel at one time, and the mountain people burned it and I never knew quite why. He was a kind of promoter and developer and mayor of the city of. . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Near Monteagle?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, the adjoining county. It's where they have the wind tunnel now.

DR. CRAWFORD: Tullahoma?

MR. CHENEY: Tullahoma, yeah. He was mayor of Tullahoma.

Prentice was a conservative, balanced sort of operation. He wasn't very imaginative. I would say that as much as a man's political faith could be encompassed by such a thing, that he was in there three terms just because old man Crump wanted him in there. There wasn't anything conspicuous enough about his administration. It was generally recognized [that] it was honest as administrations go and he wanted competent people in there and tried to get them. But the reason he didn't have any . . . Crump was very much in power at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did he get along with the Legislature?

MR. CHENEY: Prentice?

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. If he had to support Mr. Crump, did that cause any strains with the rural block?

MR. CHENEY: Nothing comes to mind. The Crump machine was thorough. Most of the time sought to ameleorate their relationships particularly with West Tennessee rural people. One time they sent out missionaries to encourage sympathy and so forth and proposed to do things for the counties and all and it was effective too.

DR. CRAWFORD: Just what do you mean, "sent out missionaries?"

MR. CHENEY: Well, men who will preach the good intentions of the city of Memphis. What Memphis could do for them and would do and that kind of thing.

DR. CRAWFORD: I know Mr. Crump kept key people in some of the West Tennessee rural counties.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, his influence was somewhat extended and he had people---I knew of two or three men. Their names stick up in my mind now--who were in Tennessee politics who had a good word for Mr. Crump.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you ever meet Robert Guinn at Savannah? He was a road contractor, but a Crump support in a several county area.

MR. CHENEY: I can't remember, but his name sounds familiar and I must have met him down there, but I don't recall any relationship with him. Yes, I remember about a Robert Guinn down there.

DR. CRAWFORD: What influence did Mr. Crump have during this time on the Tennessee Supreme Court? I think we are dealing with the pinnacle of his power in the Prentice Cooper administration or Jim McCord's.

MR. CHENEY: I always will believe that the Supreme Court humped it along to get action against that County Unit Law. I remember thinking at the time that the old court wasn't completely insensitive to sentiment, not only Crump's but around the state because the people became outraged--Montgomery County, Sullivan County--a number of large counties. But they got into this fight. Of course, I don't know what the legal ramifications are concerned. Georgia--the law that governed down in Georgia--I believe began life and never did attain any more than being a party rule of the

Democratic Party. But the party situation in Georgia is different. It's almost a one party state. It began soon after the reconstruction when the so-called Bourbons came back into power. This came along in Georgia to keep control in the rural counties and that was what it was for. But it was the time when rural sentiment and particularly confederate sentiment down in Georgia was strong. They lived with it, I don't know, they only got rid of it since sometime after Tennessee's experience.

DR. CRAWFORD: It lasted a very long time there.

MR. CHENEY: This one was very different. Of course, Tennessee is a different kind of state. They went at it a bit differently. The Supreme Court, I don't think made the argument itself too long to throw that thing out. The only thing I remarked at the time, that it occurred to me that they acted with more dispatch than the Supreme Court. It's always been a habit with them.

DR. CRAWFORD: Let's see, Prentice Cooper was not married at that time, was he?

MR. CHENEY: No, he was a bachelor. I remember having lunch with him once or twice out there in the governor's mansion and at that time and it was on West End. It changed soon after that. Anyhow his mother was there some of the time. He had a housekeeper and a parrot. I remember having lunch out there with him with nobody but me and maybe she was a cousin of his--fairly youngish woman and Laura, the parrot, was there.

DR. CRAWFORD: How long did he keep Laura, the parrot?

MR. CHENEY: God knows! They live forever, you know, parrot's do. I don't know. I lost track of Prentice when I got to be Tom Stewart's secretary in '42. He (Stewart) had been appointed to fill the seat vacated by a Chattanooga man. Anyhow, he was elected and I was on the Banner and afterwards I took that job and went with him to Washington. Prentice was still governor. Of course, we got along with him all right. Prentice didn't have a lot of warm-blooded friends.

I didn't stay with Tom but three years. When the war got over with I came back to write the great American political novel.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year did you go back with the paper?

MR. CHENEY: I didn't go back to the paper. I just came back down here. I left Tom on V-J Day in '45. I came back down to my flat which was on the Vanderbilt Campus in Nashville with the intentions of getting back to the employment of spending full time at writing. I soon left the state and went down to a Georgia Island, St. Simon's Island, to write.

I wasn't in the state when Tom ran again. But what had happened after my absence was attributed largely to Prentice. I thought we had good relations with the old man. I called old man Crump; oh, Tom called him, but I called him regularly. Tom had gotten to be chairman of the southern caucus on freight rates. I kept the books naturally, and I reported to old man Crump about every week or ten days.

He had a keen interest in freight rates--had had a long time. He believed in it and so forth. It was sort of a religion down there. It seemed to me at that time that their relationship was very cordial. After I left, the boy,[or] big fellow over there in West Tennessee who became congressman--Fats Everett succeeded me. Fats was a good man. I broke him in and he wasn't very intellectual, but he knew his d--- politics. Anyhow, we thought about it and what I heard was that Prentice wanted to get rid of Tom. He wanted to come up there. That they incited Joe Carr who was then Secretary of State---always a party mobilization man and Willie Gerber. I don't know why Willie didn't like Tom, but my information was that he was drawn into this Carr-Cooper Alliance to get rid of Tom. And you know they did, to their own downfall!

When I came back to the state the campaign was too far gone and it was an awkward situation. I didn't know a d--- thing about it, but old man Crump stayed in there and we were both going to get beaten and Prentice was going in there. There wasn't any other way to read it. But there was not anybody that was able to talk sense to the old man and get it through his head.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, he was hard to reason with and probably more so later than he had been earlier.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, he was nearly eighty years old or there about or almost eighty, yes and been in power too long, you know. Yes, a few years earlier he'd never have thought of getting himself in that position. They got a good man, but he wasn't a good candidate in there to run against Tom. Tom

had made an acceptable senator and he had a lot of friends over the state.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was this when they got the other candidate, Mitchell, in?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. They picked up Mitchell. The argument was that Tom didn't have a war record. Well, h--- he was old enough he didn't need to have a war record as a matter of fact. He was in Congress at the time during the war.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Crump believed a lot in war records, you know.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, and they carried their weight all right, but he sure picked a winner. Of course, they dropped the race, but Tom polled about 2 to 1 against Mitchell.

DR. CRAWFORD: But that left it open for Estes Kefauver.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, of course, Estes won it on a minority vote or a plurality, you'd say. Yes, Estes knew that was the only way he could get in there. He played it very well. Very cold and very smart. Estes had a good political eye. There was no question about it. He knew the realities all right.

DR. CRAWFORD: Incidentally, have you had a chance to see Fontenay's new book on Estes Kefauver?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I have. I think it is very good.

DR. CRAWFORD: I am reading it, but I haven't finished it yet.

MR. CHENEY: It's a little bit inevitable. It's a journalistic job by a newspaperman who [was on the] scene. He perhaps has more knowledge of the newspaper story of him than he does any other aspect and it has some emphasis there, but that is completely legitimate. I think he dug it out pretty well. He got a good story on him. I was on the opposite side except for that brief stay when Estes was in the cabinet as Commissioner of Finance. Well, of course, he was in the lower House. He, of course, was getting ready to run against Tom for some time. Tom was not surprised because he had expected it.

There was a story that I got from Tom, or I got it from somebody in the organization. It was a story of political ingratitude, ruthlessness, on the part of Estes which is probably true. My version of it I am sure is partisan.

Tom was not a man to be distinguished for his intellect, but he was a warm hearted man and he never said anything bad about anybody. Almost never wished anything bad on anybody and he was thoughtful, which was a political attribute too. He had, perhaps had some mixed motives in this. Soon after he came up to the Senate and Estes was new down there as a member of the House, there was a bill that came up. Well, the thing was--it was about the water system, the damming and diking around Chattanooga which was important to both of

them, but particularly important to Estes. The bill had gotten screwed up and had gotten into the TVA General Bill somehow and should have been in the Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill. This was small and bureaucratic, but it could have been a real lot of trouble.

At that time TVA was sacrosanct and nobody could touch it except a few men. But there was one man who was the magician of it and that was old man George Norris. This came up and Tom called on old man George and explained it to him. It was called a bureaucratic typographical error or an organizational error. Norris saw immediately what it was and said, "Look, the simplest way to do this is to go over and see Frank and explain it to him and have him order this thing." (Meaning FDR) Of course, that was the throne, and here was a shavetail senator; he was very foreign to getting this kind of intimate session with [the President]. Out of the kindness of his heart, he was like this, [he said], "Look, it means more to Estes than it would to me in his place and so forth." And he called him up and waited for him and took him to the White House. Estes got in on it and do you know what that S-- of a B---- did?

DR. CRAWFORD: I'll bet in the campaign he took credit.

MR. CHENEY: Worst than that! Of course, what was happening: this was a matter up in the Senate committee and of course all this maneuvering had to be unofficial until the committee announced its action, you see. They all came back of course, Tom had never thought of violating their act.

Estes went back to the House and called a press conference and took credit for the whole thing and never mentioned Tom's name over breaking the terms of the ban in the Senate. Of course, he (Estes) was not a member of the Senate and wasn't under their control. But the decency! But old Estes was an East Tennessee hard-fisted, played hard ball most of the time. I liked Estes and there were a lot of great qualities, but he was a hard-fisted East Tennessee politician. I always held that against him. It was kind of an indecency. As a matter of fact, I think it had a considerable part in the fact that Kefauver had few personal friends in Congress and the Senate or in the House, for it had been said to me by a considerable number of people. I didn't mean to get off on it.

DR. CRAWFORD: This was Estes' success during the
Crump period.

MR. CHENEY: Well, of course, he defied the old man
to his grave I reckon.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, that is supposed to be the first
really public defeat that he ever had.

Estes, of course, was a strong personal campaigner. Did you ever see him campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he was a bumbling sort of fellow,
but he was very effective--the most
effective hand shaker I guess ever came down the pike. He was very
individualistic in his style.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was not popular in the Senate. I

think perhaps he moved too fast for them.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. I can't get over it that he was pretty cold-blooded with people.

DR. CRAWFORD: I did not understand that. That's news to me.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, if you couldn't do something for me I wouldn't have anything to do with you. It's easy to get that impression, but I got it from a good many people. They were prejudiced. Now I didn't have that impression when he was in Prentice Cooper's cabinet in his first state office. Of course, I was a newspaperman and he was always very warm and he always had time to stop and have a conversation and he had good stories and so forth. I was very much taken with him. I was very convinced he was bright and [that he] knew he was bad mouthing and he was.

DR. CRAWFORD: Apparently, he was a very intelligent person, wasn't he?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he was.

DR. CRAWFORD: Had his personal problems started that early?

MR. CHENEY: We never heard about it then. Of course, we knew about it later. He consumed a quart of liquor every day, or so it was said. I got this from a man that was campaigning with him. I wasn't campaigning then. This was a newspaperman that was (this was probably not his campaign against Stewart, but his next one). I know it was because this man was on a

Scripps-Howard paper there in Memphis at the first campaign and this is why Prentice put him on his staff. Now, that next campaign he was supposed to carry the bottle. They fed it out to him during the day-- spaced it (laughter).

DR. CRAWFORD: Nevertheless he held it much better than some people did.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he did. When you speak of how much he drank, I've seen him performing and there wasn't any. . . . Being on the looks side I thought it slowed him up a little bit, but he seemed to be very much at himself and carried on anyway.

DR. CRAWFORD: He never seemed to give the personal appearance of it as Frank Clement did later. I suppose he handled it better. The press was more kind to people then, weren't they?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, one thing that I think had its effect with the press and a good many other people that old Estes never made damn bit of bones about his drinking. He drank and that was that. Frank tried to hide his. He did at first.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, that probably made a difference.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. People finally judge you by pretensions, that is, how you feign your pretensions anyhow.

THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THIS PROJECT IS "RECENT POLITICAL HISTORY OF TENNESSEE." THE PLACE IS SMYRNA, TENNESSEE. THE DATE IS NOVEMBER 7, 1981. THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. BRAINARD CHENEY AND THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEW # 6.

DR. CRAWFORD: Go ahead, Mr. Cheney.

MR. CHENEY: I had a girl in the office of Tom Stewart when he was senator--you call them receptionists--she was the most unusual receptionist I ever had, I guess. She was from a distinguished family I guess. She was a Taylor--her name wasn't Taylor [at the time], but she was [formerly] I.A. Taylor. She had been up there through three different men by the time I got there. And she had been in politics so she came to Nashville as a secretary to Governor Alf Taylor. She used to regale us with little stories about it sometimes. Governor Taylor was, I believe, her uncle, anyhow he was a kinsman. She was young then, she said, in her teens. And at that time they sort of took out for dinner in the Capital. They closed down and she and the governor went down the hill. He lived down the hill. That was before Victory Park and all had been built and those rows of red brick houses. The governor's mansion at that time was along in there. Everyday they had the noon meal and she and the governor went down there. She lived with him and it was very family-like.

I don't have anything of real relevance about Alf's administration. He was an enormously popular as a person over the state. It was said that he never accomplished anything as governor.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why do you think he didn't?

MR. CHENEY: Well, he was at loggerheads with the Democratic Legislature. I was told that Uncle Alf decided that he couldn't get anything through himself and he would just block anything that they tried to do and he made a reputation for the number of vetoes. That was his chief political contribution. He vetoed everything that the Democratic Legislature tried to put through all he could.

DR. CRAWFORD: I've heard that they used to play horseshoes out on the shady afternoon side of the capital there. Do you know if that is true?

MR. CHENEY: It sounds like it was much more leisurely in that day. I didn't appear on the scene on the hill until about after '25 and this here was about 1920.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, you say it was more leisurely then. How does it contrast with the governor's office today?

MR. CHENEY: Well, of course, the governor has an elaborate staff now. I hadn't been up there since Frank Clement's administration. I can't be current about it. Even in our day we had one man who dealt with the press as press secretary, but I was supposed to be head of the organization--public relations organization and there were three or four others in there with us. Besides that, there were more potentially related to it. For example,

more informally Hilton Butler was always an advisor and a speech writer. Old Joe Henry, the man who died the other day, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court--rough cut of a politician if I ever knew one--at that time he was an attorney.

DR. CRAWFORD: He died during this last year?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. Joe Henry was one of Frank's speech writers. Certain types of speeches Joe was very good on. There was a man from East Tennessee. . . . The governor's office had at least a half dozen men who were directly related to some aspect of it and kind of an organized staff.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was it like in the 1920's by contrast?

MR. CHENEY: One man and two or three secretaries ran it pretty much back in Hill McAlister's day.

Ralph Perry who had I had been Ralph's understudy as a political writer. Ralph left the Banner to be Hill's secretary. He stayed with McAlister, I believe throughout the two terms. He pretty well ran it while there may have been three girls in their office.

DR. CRAWFORD: The governor didn't work nearly as hard then, did he?

MR. CHENEY: Never did work what?

DR. CRAWFORD: He did not have as much work to do in the Twenties, did he?

MR. CHENEY: No, I don't think so. I would say that the office, the volume of what would run through a governor's office, certainly had increased by the time Frank Clement was in there considerably. I guess the bureacracy of the State of Ten-

nessee had greatly increased by that time. They had some relations with the governorship most of it. I guess the governorship, well it isn't quite like the captain on a ship. There are a lot of things the governor has to do like sign his name, but he can always depute his representation in practically any organic point. Yet he does have that same responsibility that the captain of a ship has if anything goes wrong particularly. Various governors have exercised a great deal of surveillance at their own discretion. For example, it was said, for I never saw this, that Austin Peay used to take unexpected strolls through various and sundry state buildings and he would suddenly pop in there and be walking through as the governor. Ordinarily, they wouldn't see him once in six months and he had a very sharp eye too. (Laughter) I don't know but I don't think that Hill McAlister ever did that. I can't remember that Frank ever did or exercised that kind of surveillance.

DR. CRAWFORD: During the Prentice Cooper administration do you remember anything about his later campaigns, the one in 1940 or the one in 1941? Of course, you were gone in '44.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I was gone in '44. No, not really, I was in the '42 campaign. I had been off down on the island working. I had left the Banner but I came back for that campaign. But I didn't cover the governor's race. I covered the senate race.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now which year, 19. . .?

MR. CHENEY: Forty-two. Because I went to cover Tom's race and he asked me to take the job as his secretary. I had just finished the draft of a novel and had come back to the state. I thought I was going to try to get into the war somewhere. I went to the Marines and to the Navy and to the Air Corps. I couldn't get in. At about the time that this went on they handed down the regulation if you were over 38 they didn't take you any more. I ran into that. I was then 42. I couldn't get in so I covered the campaign. Tom came to me and I had just gotten turned down from the Navy, I believe. Tom said, "What about going to Washington and fight the battle of Washington?" I had never thought of going up there and this appealed to me and I got up there on New Year's Day in 1943.

DR. CRAWFORD: The end of '42?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, that was the end of '42.

DR. CRAWFORD: So you were up there awhile?

MR. CHENEY: I was from '43 on through the . . . to September 1945.

DR. CRAWFORD: After V.J. Day.

MR. CHENEY: After V.J. Day.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you cover Prentice Cooper's second campaign in 1940?

MR. CHENEY: I must have. Let's see, I was there I think. Let me see. I may not have.

I got a Guggenheim. I finished the first novel in '39--published in '39 I believe. I got a Guggenheim, I believe in '41--about the middle of '41--and it lasted over and I don't guess I did. You said '40?

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh.

MR. CHENEY: The campaign of '40--what can I remember about it if I was here?

DR. CRAWFORD: I suppose there was not much doubt that Prentice Cooper could be elected.

MR. CHENEY: No, he was the organization's man and the organization was running high, wide and handsome then. You see, The Tennessean and Luke Lea had been the hub of the opposition as we always saw it except for that brief false running of Browning's first entry which only lasted 6 months I guess. Then they squared off against each other and we had always played along. We were always against anything the Tennessean was strong about. We played strong with old man Crump and that crowd. It was almost an organization within the Democratic Party. Of course, it was considerably weakened after the collapse--The Tennessean, and the Lea-Caldwell business that took the principals out of politics. The Tennessean continued to be the bower of that organization but it was not as powerful as it had been. I don't know who opposed Prentice Cooper in '40. I'd have to be refreshed about it.

DR. CRAWFORD: He didn't have much opposition as I remember.

MR. CHENEY: That's right or that's my impression about

it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did his relations with Crump remain good throughout the time?

MR. CHENEY: When he quit office while he was still in, he got an ambassadorship to South America.

DR. CRAWFORD: Peru, I believe it was. Did he marry while he was still in office?

MR. CHENEY: I think he married when he was ambassador down there. He married this very nice person. I have met her. She was not a debutante, but he was twice her age. He had to be at least fifty by that time, I think.

DR. CRAWFORD: Hortense Cooper is her name and she lives now in Shelbyville.

MR. CHENEY: I have just met her casually once. Everybody I knew thought well of her. He had two or three children.

DR. CRAWFORD: One of them I believe, is talking about a race for Congress now.

MR. CHENEY: Talking about it. Prentice was a strange type to be in a political office. The only other man I ever knew of and his was entirely physical, Estes Gwinn was a unprepossessive looking small man--scrawny, and one outstanding feature was that he had crossed eyes--hideously crossed eyes so that it was a shock to see him, you know. But he was smart and he was a good speaker. He was astonishingly a good speaker. When he got up there, you couldn't expect much from him and anything was good. Estes never made much way in the state. There was some question about his char-

acter.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Gwinn?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. He was mixed in with the last days of Luke Lea. It was a tribute to his reputation and ability that Luke Lea employed him. Now, I don't know what the terms of this was, but he was the smartest lawyer that Lea had. His sense of strategy and what not and he was shrewd and had a reputation for it. He was sort of smeared. There was a story about him and I guess his connection with Lea was such and then he had natural handicaps and he never was in politics after that.

DR. CRAWFORD: What office did he hold? Did he hold an elective office?

MR. CHENEY: I don't think he did. He was Lea's lawyer and ran for governor that one time. He may have held some office in Shelby County. He was always anti-Crump. The Crump machine when he first came up was contemptuous of him. He wasn't respectable in their terms. Of course, they could take your respectability away from you down there in those days.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, they sort of defined respectability themselves down there.

MR. CHENEY: I never knew. They thought he stank morally, but I never knew. I never knew for my own peace of mind. What he was involved in was a piece of campaign skull-dugery all right, but the terms of it weren't. I didn't have an objective viewpoint on it and I didn't know all the facts. I do know what allegedly happened. He had assurance. I don't have any evidence of this except the circumstances are first hand enough for me

to be convinced that Luke Lea had put him in the race and had kept him in the race, though he was ostensibly running against Luke's announced candidate. I am convinced that that is true, but this I was not a party to either, but I got it from the mouth of the man who was active in it and who was managing the campaign and who I knew very well indeed. I don't believe he lied to me. I do know he was tough enough to have done this. He, of course, was a seasoned campaigner and Ronnie Ormes who was one of the best managers I ever knew.

DR. CRAWFORD: Ronnie Ormes?

MR. CHENEY: O-R-M-E-S. He came from Franklin. He knew it didn't smell right then the way things were going in the campaign.

DR. CRAWFORD: Gwinn's campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Gwinn's campaign. It was about, drawing on toward well, it was right at the time for, what do you call it when you can't get into a campaign--three weeks before the election.

DR. CRAWFORD: Final date to file.

MR. CHENEY: The thing had crossed his mind for some reason. He said he didn't really know what brought him to this position, but in some sense all was not right and he was walking down to Victory Square that night. Our headquarters were in the old Maxwell House. But he was just nervous and he saw

Gwinn. Gwinn was supposed to be up in East Tennessee and making speeches and he came in there. He went in the Andrew Jackson Hotel and he cut in right behind him. He (Ormes) caught the elevator--missed Gwinn's elevator but got the one right after, and got there deliberately.

He knew a few things. He knew he saw another man in there who was Luke Lea's bag man. He was Bill Overall. He came from this county.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was his name?

MR. CHENEY: Bill Overall.

DR. CRAWFORD: Bill Overall! That's an old name in Tennessee politics.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, in Tennessee politics. He ran into the room and knocked the door open. I mean right behind Overall and it was Overall and Gwinn and Overall with the black bag. Evidence of guilt was there before them. Ormes was like this: He backed Gwinn up against the wall. Ormes was almost twice Gwinn's size and said, "Look, you little knothed S.O.B. You don't double cross me! This state isn't big enough for both of us if you double cross me in this race. G-- d--- it. You get on the road and I want to hear from you." And he did! (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: He finished the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he finished the campaign later and make a h--- of a canvass in those last three weeks and it was his best.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was a good public speaker?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. He campaigned hard those last three weeks. I was with him. I didn't know any of this until afterward, but this was my first campaign. They [Horton] won, but they were due to win. Gwinn was an unknown. While the Banner and the Chattanooga Times supported him and came out for him, but that was because he was the only man in the field against the great machine (Crump). He didn't have any money and Luke never gave him enough to hardly keep him on the He had a hard time getting enough money to keep his campaign going. We had two or three old campaigners in there who were old men who were superannuated. We were scared to shut the door. That is, Ormes used to laugh and say, "We had to go down one at a time to get a meal. If we all got out of there, the hotel proprietor would come and lock the door and make us pay them some money before we could get back in. "

(Laughter) It was a hurdle camp. Horton was due to win, and later Gwinn came out and Lea employed him as counsel and so forth. And it was generally accepted that The Banner and The Tennessean had gotten out but the sufferers had been double crossed.

DR. CRAWFORD: What kind of public speaker was Prentice Cooper?

MR. CHENEY: He was lucid, clear and matter of fact, but he had no flights of oratory. I've heard him. . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: He was well educated, wasn't he?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he was well educated and smart.

He had his little embellishments. He wasn't effective like. . . Well, he didn't have many of the attributes of a good campaigner except he was intelligent and had a command of his language. He was coherent and had some tricks. He had some adroitness as a campaigner. He didn't look like much. He knew something about it. He made the best of what he had. I was surprised at times that he was as effective as he was.

DR. CRAWFORD: As governor or campaigner?

MR. CHENEY: As campaigner. Now as a governor, well, he was on top of his job. While he wasn't an aggressive man or expansive like Clement, he was very much aware to see that the government was run straight. There wasn't any hanky panky and [every] man did his job.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, Mr. Crump liked honesty in public officials.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, I think it was Crump's belief and the honesty of this man and the fact that he gave Memphis its share I guess. Memphis was never openly [greedy] because it was the biggest city it seemed to me during my years there. They always stood on manners and they never tried to hog anything that I knew about in passing out political favors. I never saw any evidence of that. They were always pretty mannerly. They were conscious of the fact that they were a big city and that they were particularly West Tennessee.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, Mr. Crump was able to do that, I think, to generally maintain some balance in things.

MR. CHENEY: Of course, if he really wanted anything I guess, they got it. For example, one of the terms of the Lea-Crump brief alliance was that the Election Commission down there was made up of one Republican and two Democrats, anyhow. The Crump man on the [Commission] and his term was up and they wanted him re-appointed. (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: That was an important commission.

MR. CHENEY: That was important, yeah!

DR. CRAWFORD: Very much! That was a key commission for the machine.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, surely. They were claiming that it was all honest and open, but they wanted their man stealing it. They didn't want Luke Lea's or someone else's man down there. I wish I could think of something that happened in Cooper's administration but I. . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: The war effort absorbed a great deal of the attention, didn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. This transition was very remarkable. I had little to do with it. Cousin Jim, as I always called McCord (Governor) was no kin of mine, but Charlie Moss who directed the Banner and was my direct boss and was city editor. I was very fond of him and we were very close. And Jim called him his

cousin [because] his mother was a McCord. I always called him "Cousin Jim". He was an amiable and so gentlemanly, country style. . . .

What was he? By trade he was an . . . ?

DR. CRAWFORD: An auctioneer.

MR. CHENEY: An auctioneer. He was supposed to be the best in the state. He was a man that never made enemies either really. He never said anything bad about anybody. He was in Congress. Let's see I guess, he was in Congress in '42. He'd had no opposition and then he ran for governor and he succeeded Prentice, I guess.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, in '44.

MR. CHENEY: And he virtually had no opposition. The Tennessean supported him and along with the Banner. I guess that is probably unique. The thing was with war time and there wasn't any issues and the Tennessean came out for him. The old man had practically no opposition worth a name--some nominal opponent. Of course, there hadn't been a real hard fight for governorship in a good while. Prentice, the Crump machine's control, and state organization was so strong at that period it was just that high moment before the fall you know. Nobody wanted to undertake it or make any serious race against them.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh.

MR. CHENEY: I think there was some evidence of that plus the war that made this situation such that McCord could go in there without any real race for it. He got beaten the next time, and the school teachers beat him you

know. That was one of the mean pieces of politics--school politics--in my book.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did that happen?

MR. CHENEY: Well, he put through the sales tax. The first sales tax that was proposed back under Hill McAlister and Hill supported it. This was one of the . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: What happened to it? I was not aware of that. That is something I did not know.

MR. CHENEY: All right, this was the heart of the Depression, you know. This would have been '32. Well, it would have been the legislature of '31 I guess. The state was in bankruptcy practically at that time. But it was rough at that time. They didn't have any organized department of accounting. They sort of ran it by osmosis and guess. There must have been a million dollars--a million dollars was a lot of money back there--in county school teacher warrants out and they couldn't cash them.

DR. CRAWFORD: They weren't being paid in 1931.

MR. CHENEY: They weren't being paid, yes, that's right.

So they all got together down here. I remember it ought to come to me. There's a man whose name ought to come to me, he is a Tennessean but he was at Columbia University at that time and he was a tax expert and he sat with them--Hill, Crump, Jimmy Stahlman, Ochs--a young[man with] the Chattanooga Times--and, the head of the Retail Merchants' Association and the two municipal

leagues. These people were informally advising around there and they all agreed that by G-- there wasn't any way out without having a sales tax. Hill (McAlister) went along with it and accepted it all right, but old man Crump was a little nervous about it--his populism somehow, and the labor organization over there was close to him and for whatever the reasons.

I was sitting there and I was not, of course, in the council but I was in and out of the meeting as a Banner reporter at that time. It was a private meeting there in the Governor's office and there were about a dozen of them or more. This was agreed upon. Then this thing (pause) [happened] overnight! As a matter of fact, that was determined that the bill was [to be] introduced and it had endorsees on it and so forth. There was an issue tripped up with old man Crump. The attorney general (I can't think of his name right now) he was in there a long time, and said or left the impression that the tax could be absorbed by the merchants. It was only 2%, I think, or a cent and a half. I never really knew if this was truly a hassle or whether Ed Crump just got cold feet. So did the Banner.

Overnight they raised this constitutional issue and there was this flimflam in there and I never was quite sure how honest it was, if it was an excuse or a reason. But the Attorney General finally came up saying that they couldn't write it in there--constitutional part--that it shouldn't be absorbed by the merchants. Crump pulled out on it and Jimmy pulled out and I didn't [know it].

Old man Armstead, called Charles Armstead, our editor at that time, didn't communicate much with me. He was a man of about 80 years old. I came up on the hill. I had been writing for it in favor of

it tooth and nail. I came up on the hill and found out and in that early morning edition without my knowing about it, our morning edition hit the street with a streamer across it, "Against the Bill." And I didn't even know about it! It was one of the most embarrassing things that happened to me in my life. The old man had forgotten me altogether. I think he just read Joe Hatcher anyhow. He didn't think much of me anyhow. I went in and got Jimmy and raised h--- about it. Jimmy was apologetic. But they all pulled out from under Hill [McAlister].

I remember having a little session with him--a little grave session--he was a pretty dignified man very much a gentleman--man of considerable ability. I said, "Hill, good G--! Fight them!" I guess I was a little bit foolish. "Tell them they can't do this to you!"

He said, "Oh Lord, I've lived with these men in politics all of my career. I couldn't turn against Jimmy Stahlman and Ed Crump." And of course, it didn't make any sense. He had to just take it spartan [like]. He took the blame for it. Well, it was pretty bad.

Nobody else had had guts enough to get into it. But it had been in the offing and it had been introduced to every legislature after that and finally it got around to where they decided that they had to have it. That people had got used enough to the thing. It was to be brought in as a source of revenue for the schools. The schools had to have it. I will say just in passing what Hill did after that, which is what he had to do and it was accepted. Nobody

else could have done it.

He cut the general revenue fund for the schools by like a third and supported those floating checks--I mean vouchers--for school teachers. It was after he took this d---. . . . they got value and he paid the school teachers off at least. He did that and he had cut the school budget though. I suppose the only time in modern history it has been cut radically like that, but the state was bankrupt practically! He did make the situation sound again. They, through a lot of excise taxes and what-not, made out.

But under "Cousin Jim" they put it through as a special tax for the schools. And do you know the school teachers in the next election helped to defeat him! I was not close to that election, but that was what I got straight down the line about it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, that was ironic because education profited a lot from that.

MR. CHENEY: Even then it was unpopular as h---. It licked him and it was his second term, I believe. He had had two terms, but he was going for a third term if I remember right.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh.

MR. CHENEY: And part of it was that the TEA didn't support him. The TEA was a cold blooded crowd politically.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, it seems strange to me---of course I wasn't around then---why they did not support him because it brought in money for the schools.

MR. CHENEY: For the schools. Yes. But that was certainly charged by political writers and people with political know how at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did the public react to the sales tax under Jim McCord?

MR. CHENEY: (Laughter) They were against it. There was a good bit of popular opposition to it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did people express this opposition to it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Some merchants made it worse by saying, "Well, give me that two cents for Uncle Cousin Jim," about the state. And a lot of them didn't collect it. Well, I don't know--most of them did to be sure.

DR. CRAWFORD: Legally they had to.

MR. CHENEY: They put it on him though. "I'm sorry I have to get these two pennies for Uncle Jim." Here's a man who had come into office without any opposition and here he was beaten after that. I believe he had been in there four years. Three terms is a little beyond the usual tenure. He did get beat. That was what beat him. There was no question in anybody's mind what beat him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Someone told me that in speeches after that people in crowds would throw pennies at Governor McCord.

MR. CHENEY: I wouldn't be surprised. Yes, he took a lot of flack from it and I suppose it was the fact that somehow the TEA organization--mealy mouth about it--didn't get in there and take the campaign lead that they should have. They were the ones who were the direct beneficiaries of it. But they didn't.

DR. CRAWFORD: Usually they campaign for something that means money to them.

MR. CHENEY: For them, yes. They had it and didn't have to.

DR. CRAWFORD: Which makes this not very understandable.

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were out of the state during part of the McCord administration?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I was working on another novel. And I remember I sold it around in '50. I was living part time in Washington and in New York awhile and then in California a little while.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did you really come back to Tennessee?

MR. CHENEY: I was up in Washington doing a little free lancing when Hilton Butler wrote me and told me the plans for running Frank and I had only met him. He was young you know. But it was on Hilton's recommendation that I came back and got into the campaign.

DR. CRAWFORD: What part did you play in '52 campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Well, I think I was the first man on the payroll to write speeches. Maybe, who was his Knoxville buddy? His later Secretary of State? And they broke up after the first administration. Eddie

DR. CRAWFORD: Eddie Friar?

MR. CHENEY: Eddie Friar, yes. Eddie was on payroll and I guess I was the second one. They simply put me in an office. Well, matter of fact I sat out--I believe--I lived in a room in the YMCA, I remember. That was right down town and served my purposes and I began gathering stuff and seeing people and so forth and organizing for the campaign opening speech and so forth. That was say like maybe the middle of the winter in February or March or something like that.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was an early start.

MR. CHENEY: I was mostly getting ammunition. The organization didn't get under way until what? And I moved down here. Buford and I had a drawing room and a room on either side there at the Hermitage [Hotel]. It must have been April or May or somewhere along in there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, that was the first time you were back in the state full time?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Of course, I think there were four

candidates in that primary. Frank was not the most acknowledged to begin with. But he had some good men behind him. They knew what they were doing. He had some money. Bob Creighton, who I think headed the truckers at that time, and Bob was a rich man. He dealt with rich men. He was new to politics, but he wasn't new to raising money. They were younger men and Frank and his organization was well heeled. Let's see there was Browning, Frank, and Owen and let me see. . . . Who in the h---. Gosh, its terrible, somebody from West Tennessee. Frank sort of came out from behind. It was '52?

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. Fifty-two election, yes.

MR. CHENEY: Oh yes, there was somebody from West Tennessee from a rural county. What was his name. There were two other men in there to begin with. Frank came from behind. Of course, he had a good stout organization behind him of young men. He soon made his name as a campaigner and a speaker.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, that is more or less another chapter-- your work in the 1952 campaign. You've given so much today I guess. . .

MR. CHENEY: Call it a day. Well, I guess my memory is sort of flagging. I'll look at a Blue Book on Frank's first administration and I can pull it all together and have it better in mind.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, you returned to Tennessee. You were the second person employed in the Clement Campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you write anything about this one time.
Was there an article or account you did with
someone or you wrote with someone or something like that?

MR. CHENEY: There may have been.

DR. CRAWFORD: Someone asked me the other day about a book
on Clement and I did not know anything about
it.

MR. CHENEY: Oh I talked to Dr. Greene, up at U.T.
political science. What's his first name?
I can't think of it now.

DR. CRAWFORD: Lee Greene.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he did. I don't know if he has ever
published it or not.

DR. CRAWFORD: No, he has not.

MR. CHENEY: It's a biography of Frank. He talked to
me, yes, at length about it. I have a
transcript of what we said. I'll get it out and see what I said.

(Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: That is an interesting era in its own right
when you get to the Clement period.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, Frank was an active and ambitious
young governor then. He made some name for
himself. He made some conspicuous hay out of mental health which was
kind of a live topic at that time. I guess he really organized the
Mental Health Department.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, something needed to be done.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, that needed an opening.

DR. CRAWFORD: I think next I'll be talking for awhile
if he feels like it with George McCanless.

You have some contact with him?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, George and I were classmates at Van-
derbilt. We have kept up with each other over
the years. I was up to MTSU yesterday and happened to run into his
daughter who was living at the campus.

DR. CRAWFORD: Sahah, is that the daughter?

MR. CHENEY: I believe that my be the name.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, I know her.

MR. CHENEY: She's a history professor also. Her father's
doing all right as far as I know. I haven't
seen him in a good while. Give him my greetings.

DR. CRAWFORD: We served on the Historical Commission for
several years together. I had an opportunity
to meet him some then.



THIS IS THE PROJECT OF THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THE PROJECT NAME IS "RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY." THE PLACE IS SMYRNA, TENNESSEE AND THE DATE IS DECEMBER 12, 1981. THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. BRAINARD CHENEY. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEW # 7.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Cheney, you had left Tennessee for awhile to serve on a staff in the United States Senate and had been out of the state politics awhile. What did you do after you left Washington?

MR. CHENEY: Well, in 1950 I believe it was, my wife went to Japan with a group of librarians to establish a library school in Keio University in Japan.

DR. CRAWFORD: Keio University in Japan?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I was free wheeling that is, writing. I didn't have any job-- working on a novel. I tried to get berthed either with the State Department or CIA and I hung around Washington in this connection for some time. I did a little journalism--magazines one and another. I have forgotten what magazines I published with back there. One was Reader's Digest, I believe. One or two others. Anyhow I moved

on to New York and spent the summer up there. There was a theater given to experimental plays produced and I had one that I was trying to get produced there. I don't know why it never did come off. I can't remember what the resolution was, but I moved on. Oh, my friends, the Tates, were living at Princeton then and . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Which Tate was that sir?

MR. CHENEY: Alan Tate and Caroline. Caroline was then his wife. She was a novelist and he was a poet and critic.

DR. CRAWFORD: And he had been at Vanderbilt.

MR. CHENEY: And he was there at Princeton and been there for two or three years.

There was a summer school of English that John Ransom founded and it moved around. It was at the University of Indiana. And I joined them and went over there with them. I was working on a play. Then I came on back to Nashville.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that in 1950. That fall I came back to Nashville. During that winter I got the play produced.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was the title and what was the subject of the play?

MR. CHENEY: Well a Tennessee subject--it was called, "Strangers in This World" and it involved a snake handling cult. We used the name, there was a snake handler's cult over there just out of Chattanooga--in the

hills there--not Soddy-Daisy but a neighboring town. I can't think of it now. Anyhow Vanderbilt produced it and then the Little Theatre up at Louisville produced it for me. Now this was, I guess, it had gotten to be '51. I went back up to Washington. I can't now remember why, but I know that I was there. I spent some time at Princeton with the Tates. I was working on a manuscript--I've forgotten what--I guess a novel.

Anyhow, when I got word from Hilton Bulter that this campaign was making up of Frank Clement.

DR. CRAWFORD: In the fall of 1951?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I think that was when it was.

Yes, that was about the time--the Fall of 1951. I came back down here at that time around Christmas, I guess or maybe a little before. Sometime like early in the new year I went to work on the staff.

DR. CRAWFORD: Early in 1952?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, you know, pulling background stuff together. I believe I had a room up at the old YMCA where I lived and worked. It was very centrally located, I remained there until Frank opened headquarters at the Hermitage which was just across the street from it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember when he opened headquarters?

MR. CHENEY: It was early in the spring it seems to me. The last of April maybe,

cause he made his opening speech May 31st. I wouldn't remember that, but I have recently looked it up.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was in the Hermitage.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, the headquarters were already opened then, yes, and had been for about a month.

DR. CRAWFORD: In other words about April?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, sometime in April. Yes, Buford was the campaign manager.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was, sir?

MR. CHENEY: Buford Ellington. Of course, what's his name . . . ?

DR. CRAWFORD: Eddie Friar. F-R-I-A-R. Where did you start work when you first joined the organization? Were they working when you first started? That was before the headquarters were opened.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I had a room up in YMCA which was just across Sixth Avenue--was that Six or Seventh Avenue--it's behind the Hermitage Hotel so that old brick building has now been torn down. It's where the Hyatt Regency Hotel [is]. I had a room up there and lived there and worked. I collected material in the capital and so forth to put the situation and the opening speech together. I was haunting the Tax Payers Association crowd and Herbert Bingham and his mayors. These were people I was consulting for information and things and so forth.

Of course, I saw Frank periodically.

DR. CRAWFORD: How active was Frank in dealing with the campaign group at that time?

MR. CHENEY: He was active all right. He saw my first drafts practically in the making.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you were preparing his announcement speech?

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you try to do in that speech for him?

MR. CHENEY: Well, this was his idea. It, I guess, was a young lawyer's idea, because more veteran politicians smile at it a little bit. Browning did I know. He prepared a ten-point indictment of the Browning administration and ticked it off just like a lawyer. And for some people that was a bit too grim and inflexible, but he made it work and very effectively. The point was that he had something to go on. I think he beat the Browning administration and if you could lay it on any one thing, this is something you could get your teeth into.

Browning's cohorts went unnamed, that is as far as the official record. Three lawyers bought what was a not exactly a downtown hotel but a rooming house for about \$600,000 and sold it to

the state for about, we say \$1,600,000, or at least that or a little bit more. After an ownership of less than a year. We didn't get any public disclosure of who the actual owners were. It was a good talking point. You could nail it and people could understand it. I may say old Frank nailed him to the tree. He did a good job of it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, friends had bought it, it appeared then as a speculation and it would tax the state to take it off their hands.

MR. CHENEY: And I don't know who to this day, if I ever knew. It has gone out of my mind who . . . There was some intimation that Browning's brother who was crooked as a snake and was then Commissioner of Education, was one of them, but I don't know.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were aware of it and the newspapers picked it up.

MR. CHENEY: Oh yes. They made hash out of it. It had a name. Of course, it was in the backstage, if you want to say it, or unprintable talk. It was called the "riding academy". "The riding academy" meant it was largely occupied much by female employees of the state. And that was why it got it's name as "riding academy" which implicates . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, what academy?

MR. CHENEY: Riding Academy. It was a semi-whore

house.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes. Of the "Riding Academy".

MR. CHENEY: That didn't get into print much, but it was very much a matter of word of mouth.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that generally known before Clement brought it out in a speech?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, it was in the air, but so much of it wasn't known. He got a good many facts and he certainly gave [it] wide publicity.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, did the press follow his lead in it or had the press started exposing it already?

MR. CHENEY: Well, the press had not disclosed some of it at least. It wasn't available. The Banner had given it some disclosure, but the Tennessean had been a little more shy. The Tennessean was a pretty partisan paper then. Of course, Browning was their man.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, where did Clement deliver that speech?

MR. CHENEY: Gallatin. I had to refresh my recollections the other day. I called the state library and I couldn't get a copy. They said they didn't have this particular speech yet in their files, but it was being worked on. The woman said she would call me back and send me a copy of it. I haven't gotten it.

DR. CRAWFORD: How much of it was your speech?

MR. CHENEY: I don't know. I'd have to look over it and see if I could recognize it. Of course, it went through a lot of hands. I just wrote the fundamental--the organization of the indictment--Frank had dictated that to me in the form that he wanted it--he communicated with me very frequently. We went over this speech. As a matter of fact, at one early period he doubted some figures that I had and I went back on them and damned if he wasn't right on them. He's pretty sharp! He was very familiar [with it]. I had gotten it from the newspaper files, and it didn't stand up. He kept a close eye on it. He was a formative influence on the speech. I took suggestions from him. It went through a good many hands. You know how it is.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who else was working on the speech preparation then?

MR. CHENEY: Well, Hilton Butler was one. And Eddie Friar. He worked closely with me on it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Hilton Butler was a former Memphis newspaperman who was a friend of yours and had been active in state government?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. He had been Commissioner under Prentice Cooper. He was Prentice's first Safety Commissioner and I think he may have been

Adjutant General for awhile.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was Eddie Friar's background?

MR. CHENEY: Eddie was practicing law up in Knoxville and in politics and he was supposed to be a pal of Frank's. I don't know what their earlier association was, but they were close. He was supposed to be or claimed to be the original Frank Clement man for governor.

DR. CRAWFORD: Had they been at school together?

MR. CHENEY: I have a feeling they were but I can't remember. Frank went up to Vanderbilt but he studied law over at Cumberland in that one year that practically all politicians used to take in that time. And it had a good reputation as a law school. And it could have been Eddie knew him there. Eddie was a lawyer too.

DR. CRAWFORD: And he was already working in the campaign when you came?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. He was the first one man officially appointed to the campaign.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he campaign manager? No, let's see Buford Ellington was that.

MR. CHENEY: No, but he was the informal, behind the scenes operator. He did this, that and the other.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why had Buford Ellington been selected as campaign manager?

MR. CHENEY: Well, one of the things was that he was connected with the Farm Bureau which is an important connection. He was some sort of manager. There were several considered. I know that had an important bearing upon his selection. A man named Clyde--something--who in the Farm Bureau was close to Clement in advising and he recommended Buford for it. I expect, and I don't know this, but Frank's father passed on him too. I'm sure he did 'cause his father was in the background. But they were close and Frank advised with him on [matters].

DR. CRAWFORD: Judge Robert Clement of Dickson?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. And a sounder politician I never knew than Frank's father. He was very sound and very good.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was in the background, but was his part in the campaign important?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, it was. He didn't come out front, but I consulted him constantly. He didn't demand that I ask him but I had so much respect for [his] judgment. And I'll say one or two of them there were Bob Crichton and he was "money bags".

DR. CRAWFORD: How do you spell his name?

MR. CHENEY: C-R-I-C-H-T-O-N, I believe it is. He was close to Frank, and Eddie and it was a young crowd. Of course, he was head of some organization of the truckers. He either was or had been. Anyhow, he brought the truckers behind the Clement administration and got a lot of money from them.

Frank was well-heeled from the beginning largely because

of the truckers and Bob Crichton had a hand in that. Let's see, I believe there were four candidates that year. Frank, of course, was the youngest and in some way there were some well-known men in there. I mean in a local way. There was one named Pierce, I believe. A couple more from West Tennessee.

DR. CRAWFORD: But none of them were a real threat to Browning except Clement?

MR. CHENEY: Well, it seemed to me what Clement was able to do was to come out of the crowd and become the voice that people heard and paid attention to. I think I've got this speech. There's one here that maybe I can identify it that mentions some other candidates. I believe it was a man who was later our congressman and who is now sort of a labor lawyer without much reputation. Now what was his name. His son is in trouble right now. He died in office, in the Congress.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where was he from?

MR. CHENEY: Nashville. There were three other candidates.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did Allen run that time?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, Clifford Allen. Clifford was in there, I believe and somebody from Memphis.

DR. CRAWFORD: Perhaps someone named Pierce?

MR. CHENEY: Pierce, I think and I believe someone who was sort of a bower of the

Crump machine. Maybe I am wrong about that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know if Crump supported
Clement from the beginning?

MR. CHENEY: Well, he didn't--almost yes. There
was a good bit of going between.

By the time Frank opened his speech in May he was behind Ellie.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know who had worked in get-
ting Clement and Crump together?

Who handled relations there?

MR. CHENEY: Right now it doesn't come to me.

DR. CRAWFORD: Perhaps it will come to us later.
What was Bob Crichton's background?

Do you know why he was brought into the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Bob had had no political experience
to amount to anything, but he had
spoken for the truckers and was head of the Truckers's Association.
He liked Frank and he was young. I think Eddie was instrumental
in that too. But the truckers and Bob Crichton were his earliest
henchmen there.

DR. CRAWFORD: The first contribution money came
from the trucker's organization?

MR. CHENEY: I think so, yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did they want in return for
that, Mr. Cheney?

MR. CHENEY: Well, it wasn't anything specific
talked about, that is openly, but

there was a truck [link] issue in the legislature that they wanted and they were in sympathy for. I am sure that we certainly supported it. As far as I know with easy conscience. That was certainly in the background. I remember at one of the first get-together's that we had. I guess it was along in April. It was Bob Crichton's camp that he has up here on one of the man-made lakes up around in DeKalb County. There are two of them up here.

DR. CRAWFORD: Up towards Centerville somewhere?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. We met there a week-end or something like that. I remember I did a little fishing and drinking, a little talking. I remember I was the only man that caught a fish.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was the purpose of the meeting?

MR. CHENEY: Well, it was an early campaign meeting on the campaign and issues.

DR. CRAWFORD: The staff at that time? Anyone else?

MR. CHENEY: Eddie and Bob and Frank. His father was not there, I believe. It seems to me that Don . . . was one of the young ones. He was one of the cabinet members.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were they generally about Frank Clement's age?

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were one of the few experienced people around at that time.

MR. CHENEY: Yes. And I believe maybe Hilton [Butler] could have been there. I don't remember anything particular.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was Hilton Butler's role in the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Well, general advisor. He was a good strategist and speech writer, and helped to advise me. He wrote some speeches. Frank had a lot of respect for Hilton. That man's name was Don McSween.

DR. CRAWFORD: Don McSweeney?

MR. CHENEY: He came from over in East Tennessee. There was a boy, a young man, advertising man who was Crichton's advertising man. He became the campaign's advertising man.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was his name, sir?

MR. CHENEY: He didn't know a damn thing about politics, but he did the advertising. I'll think of his name. He called here within recent weeks and I hadn't heard from him in the land of the living. He's retired some years ago. He figured into the campaign and remained with the administration at that lucrative connection with the state afterward, advertising and that sort of thing.

DR. CRAWFORD: That's sort of traditional I think. The successful candidate's advertising agency handles the business afterward. What planning did you do at that meeting at the lake?

MR. CHENEY: I don't remember clearly a single thing about that meeting. Only that I caught a fish. Well, it was talking back and forth. Of course, the manager had not been selected if I remember correctly. Things like that came into consideration. I can't say that he was selected at that meeting but he was considered.

DR. CRAWFORD: You mean Buford Ellington?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, what about the speech writing, Mr. Cheney? How many people usually worked on them. What hands did they go through?

MR. CHENEY: Well, the original basic draft, I would say, there was only Frank, Eddie, and Hilton, and myself. I consulted them all the way through. I actually put it together though. Then after it turned out this original draft, it went into Eddie and Frank's hands. From their hands to other people to read. I am sure that his father passed on it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, at the final point when the speech was to be used, did Clement pretty much use what was written or did he do it his way?

MR. CHENEY: Well, he followed it. You see, an opening speech is a comprehensive thing. Some-

time, it is the only time that they ever say the whole thing, but you cover--that is the practice--you get to cover the waterfront in your opening speech. Frank was so good at following a manuscript and he gave it his own emphasis at certain points. He made a great deal out of the ten-point indictments and he made from the beginning (this was new stuff) his mental health interest.

DR. CRAWFORD: That became a big issue with him. Do you know why he had a specific interest in mental health?

MR. CHENEY: Well, it was sort of a new thing. I confess that I was rather cautionary because I thought there was a good bit of humbug in that talk of mental health. But there was considerable promotion for it. We all recognized that it was the coming thing and a new thing and something that Frank could claim as his own.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did any of the other candidates make any commitment about mental health?

MR. CHENEY: You got me there.

DR. CRAWFORD: I don't remember it if any.

MR. CHENEY: I don't either. Here are two men who were active back in those days--Cayce Penecost and Hammond Fowler. Hammond is a peculiar kind of fellow. He never took a very firm position on anything.

DR. CRAWFORD: He later served on the Public Service Commission, didn't he?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I liked old Hammond. He was a strange fellow. I liked Cayce too.

Keith Hampton was kind of a labor voice.

DR. CRAWFORD: Which one?

MR. CHENEY: Keith Hampton. He was connected with organized labor. Cousin Jim McCord at some point was following advice.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did he get involved? Because of opposition to Browning?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he was definitely anti-Browning. Ruilman was one of them. I can't now remember exactly when Ruilman came into the picture.

DR. CRAWFORD: Which person?

MR. CHENEY: Ruilman. R-U-I-L-M-A-N Sewell was Commission of Mental Health, the first one. He was on the scene before the inauguration.

DR. CRAWFORD: People say that Governor Clement didn't really have to read the things that he was able to glance at them and understand all of it. Did you find that to be true?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, indeed. He could paraphrase as fast as any man I ever saw. I've had him do it with my stuff.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he accurate?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. He could glance at a paragraph and repeat it. He was very adept at that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you have any idea how much money was raised from the trucking interests?

MR. CHENEY: No. I do know this. In the last ten days to two weeks there is always-- for some reason there seems to be particularly important--you need to have money to go out to all the polls to get the workers and etc. Old Bob Crichton got out and raised thirty hundred thousand dollars and put in that. And that was money at that time!

DR. CRAWFORD: In the last few days of the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: In the last few days. And we had plenty of money in the pipe to go down to the boys and have them there at the polls and everything. He was given credit for it.

DR. CRAWFORD: What were the major sources of contributions besides the trucking industry?

MR. CHENEY: Well, I don't identify any at the present.

DR. CRAWFORD: But there was enough to finance a good campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. By that time Frank was enough out front. People were betting on Frank and money wasn't hard to come by.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suppose money at the beginning of a campaign is hardest to raise.

MR. CHENEY: That's right. And Frank did enjoy having a good monied crowd to put him in there and keep him going until he had a chance. They were very

loyal to him and old Bob raised the money. He was very wealthy himself. Hell, [he was] worth twenty million dollars or something like that, his family. I mean they are real rich people.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember what decisions they made about what kinds of advertising to emphasize?

MR. CHENEY: Well, I can remember vaguely that I was not enthusiastic [when] our advertising man laid out his plan, and he didn't know from Adam's off ox about politics. He did know something about what they call in the trade "packaging", but Hold on here.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was the name, sir?

MR. CHENEY: C-O-G-G-I-N.

DR. CRAWFORD: Charlie Coggin.

MR. CHENEY: There may be an "s" on the end. I don't think there is. Charlie Coggin. You may be able to get a hold of Charlie. He is very vocal--he'll talk. He'll remember a lot more about it than I did.

DR. CRAWFORD: About the advertising?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. He handled it all and it was his first break into political game of politics.

DR. CRAWFORD: Charlie Coggin was in asvertising then?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I think it had a double name. There may have been some partner with him. But

Coggin was the man who was on this deal and he later took over that account of the state you know.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was sort of traditional, wasn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah.



THIS IS A PROJECT OF THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THE PROJECT NAME IS "RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY". THE PLACE IS SMYRNA, TENNESSEE, THE DATE IS DECEMBER 12, 1981. THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. BRAINARD CHENEY. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEW # 8.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Cheney, a campaign organization usually grows during the campaign.

You have to add more staff members. Did that happen in this one?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, Coggin, of course, came in and he had some help. I can't remember bringing in anybody. Of course, there were some there-- Butler already, and of course Eddie remained very much in evidence. As a matter of fact, Eddie Friar was frequently the first man to read my speech and he used to revise something to put in what he called the "Clement touches and Clement usages". He was much more familiar with him than I was.

DR. CRAWFORD: You mean he knew the way Clement spoke better--his phrases.

MR. CHENEY: His phraseology, yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did they maintain communication around the state? What kind of telephone service did you keep then? Did they have WATS lines by

'52?

MR. CHENEY: No, there weren't any WATS lines.

You had to use the designated itinerary. You just telephoned long distance and tried to catch him whenever you needed him, or some newspaperman or anybody you could lay a hand on. We did that and it was pretty trying at times to get in touch with the candidate.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who prepared his itinerary?

MR. CHENEY: Well, officially Buford did. He had some help on it as manager.

DR. CRAWFORD: What kind of manager was Buford Ellington?

MR. CHENEY: Well, he was hard working and cautious and pretty familiar with the state. I do remember an instance. It is interesting the things that you do remember! Buford had kind of a delicate stomach and before the campaign was over he was drinking milk. His inards were about to leave him! (Laughter) I think he had to take a break. I won't be sure about that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Campaigns have been known to give people ulcers.

MR. CHENEY: Yes. His ulcers were acting up by the time they had the campaign. He was a worrier, he was.

DR. CRAWFORD: What about Eddie Friar? What sort of person was he? What were his

abilities?

MR. CHENEY: Eddie was glib, shrewd, mendacious.

(Laughter) I mean he served himself pretty well, and agreeable--very agreeable.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he have political experience before as far as you know?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, in a local way. He had been in politics up there in Knoxville.

Of course, he was part of the conspiracy. Well, he was part of the first blowup in the administration.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you mean by the "conspiracy" sir?

MR. CHENEY: Well, there was Bob Crichton, Eddie and this woman (her picture is in here). I knew her too.

DR. CRAWFORD: She had an academic degree at Vanderbilt, didn't she?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, and her picture is in here. The name leaves me at the moment.

DR. CRAWFORD: She is living back in Nashville now I understand.

MR. CHENEY: Is she? I haven't kept up with her. She and I had a little run-in. It wasn't much of a run-in because she held all the cards. I had a candidate for that Department of Public Welfare, and old friend who

I(it was just casual on my part), but she was d--- good. She's still alive if I can think of her name. Anyhow, I suggested her, but this woman had been active in the campaign and she had been head of the "Women's Bureau".

DR. CRAWFORD: Of the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I was trying to poach on her preserve. Anyhow, she handpicked Christine Arnold for that job. She was in the Tax Comptroller or Treasurer.

DR. CRAWFORD: Somehow Comptroller sounds right.

MR. CHENEY: I believe she was. This is off the record in a sense. She was having an affair with Crichton. They all got thick as thieves.

DR. CRAWFORD: You mean this lady in the campaign and Crichton?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. They sort of high-hatted old Bob Clement--the Judge. They were going to take over and run things.

DR. CRAWFORD: Friar and this lady?

MR. CHENEY: Friar, this lady and Crichton. That was when they had the split.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was after the campaign.

MR. CHENEY: That was after the campaign? But I suppose it was the first year of the administration. It was the first year that it was out.

Frank, of course, sided with his father.

DR. CRAWFORD: That would be predictable.

MR. CHENEY: Predictable. He shook them out.

He broke with Bob and he broke with Eddie and he broke with this girl--woman, Mrs. (she had a married name--she was a grass widow). It's horrible that I can't think of her name. She was Comptroller.

DR. CRAWFORD: What positions were they given after the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, for the state. Eddie, of course was the Secretary of State and this girl who was Comptroller, I believe it was. It ought to be in here, [Tennessee Blue Book]. I think.

DR. CRAWFORD: But they worked cooperatively during the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, they worked cooperatively during the campaign. They sort of assumed that they were running things.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did they get along with Buford Ellington?

MR. CHENEY: Buford was a man that played the chips that were close to his chest, but he had become Commissioner of Agriculture. I don't think they had much to do with him nor he them.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was sort of separate from them?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. Now that is my impression from it now. I think that Buford was very loyal to Frank--at that stage of the game at any rate.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did the money keep coming in adequately through the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, Frank never suffered for lack of money. It was a well-heeled campaign throughout--my impression is--chiefly due to the truckers. The truckers had a real stake they thought, and they were newly rich, you know. There was a lot of money in trucking at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know if the construction companies took a part in it?

MR. CHENEY: Well, I had no contact with anybody in the construction business that I know of or that I can recall at the present time.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did the major newspapers divide in their support?

MR. CHENEY: Well, The Banner went whole hog for Frank from the beginning. I think that Les Hart (Les Hart was an old understudy of mine) was an early Frank Clement man, when they were organizing the campaign. Les was right in there. Jimmy is not much of a wishy washy. He finds somebody and he comes out. I think he was for Frank at the start.

Frank was more or less a local boy. He was at Nashville and practicing law in Nashville. Hilton Butler, they all were close in there. They had high regard for Hilton. Joe Carr was in there too.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was Joe's part in that--Joe Carr's?

MR. CHENEY: Well, he was in the early group backing Frank. Now I can't remember Joe's activities very well now for some reason. Joe was in the legislature then--I mean in the staff of the legislature, I believe.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did Joe Henry take a part in the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, Joe was actively supporting Frank. He may have made some speeches for him. And of course, he did write some speeches, but I don't think he wrote any speeches in the campaign. I wouldn't swear he didn't, but I know that he did later. He became one of Frank's speech writers. He occasionally would use Joe.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did this campaign compare with
 the one you had seen earlier? I
know that you had covered a lot. Did you have the feeling that this
one compared well? That it was well organized?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, two things: it began well-heeled to begin with and with a lot of young men in it--very enthusiastic. That was the most distinguishing fact about it--the young and enthusiastic support.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were they about Clement's age and generation?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. You see, I was the oldest man--well, I guess Butler and I are about the same age. Bob Clement and me were the same age.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, you and Judge Clement and Hilton Butler were the more experienced people around. Well, in general this was a young group of people who had not had, perhaps much contact in government. Do you feel, in general, that they were a more honest staff than in most campaigns by virtue of being younger?

MR. CHENEY: There might have been a little more idealism. Yes, I would say there were some touches of that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did your headquarters remain at the Hermitage throughout the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. I think we had a half a dozen rooms and two or three hideouts before it was over. You know you always have to have somewhere you can get to get out of sight and traffic and so forth. The old Hermitage manager was very accommodating.

I may say quite unlike the first campaign I ever covered in which I became almost a member of the staff for L.E. Quin. We were so broke as Lonnie Ormes put it, and this was d--- near the truth, and it may have happened that we never left the headquarters--

two of us never went away to have lunch together because we were afraid the clerk would come and lock the door on us and we would have to pay to get back in.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you get along with the telephone company? I know you had bills to pay there.

MR. CHENEY: Well, the phone company was pretty accommodating in those days about getting phones in for you right away when you need them and where you need them. They seemed to be interested in politics too, you know. They were always very accommodating. You call them and you'd get it in the matter of an hour or two, you know. It's not like the consumer who may have to wait a week to get a telephone, but they had an emergency crew I guess. I don't know about other services. It was the chief thing. You had to deal with the bureaucracy.

Of course, television was fairly new then. Frank had gifts for television. Learning how to use television was still a matter of concern. It wasn't accepted. I guess we had an advisor too. It was some boy over there at WSM who was a program director. The name has left me.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did Clement seem to appreciate the importance of television?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, and he realized that he had to change his style for it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he one of the first in Tennessee to understand that and make use of it?

MR. CHENEY: I expect so. I remember that old Mayor Dempster used to make a great joke about the mike. He said, "It is like a cuspidor; it's all right if you hit it, but if you ain't, it's too bad!" (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, that was a good description. But Clement did well with it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was good looking and a good speaker and apparently he had good health.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, and good devices.

DR. CRAWFORD: What about payment of the staff? Did they have enough campaign money to keep the staff paid during the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: I think so. I felt no pinches and was paid readily.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now the primary election was in August, wasn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I guess it was early August 3rd or 7th or somewhere along in there.

DR. CRAWFORD: And that was the only one that was important I suppose?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, that was it. Yes, the Republicans didn't have a campaign sufficient to register in my memory offhand. I can't tell you who the Republican

candidate was. It may have been Tom Wall. Tom Wall stood in several elections as gubernatorial candidate and congressional candidate for the Republicans.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, that didn't take much serious attention did it--the general election?

MR. CHENEY: No.

DR. CRAWFORD: No possibility that the Republicans could have won?

MR. CHENEY: No, it wasn't taken seriously. I guess there hadn't been a serious Republican race for governor until recently. In 1920 there was Uncle Alf, but it was kind of a gesture to the whole state that

DR. CRAWFORD: To go back just a little on that, why did Alf Taylor win that election? There was a sixty year period in which he was the only Republican who did. Do you have any idea why he won?

MR. CHENEY: Well, I wasn't in the state when it occurred, but I heard it described this way. He was a very popular figure and everybody loved him and I think that was the way they made the campaign anyhow. They tried to keep as much partisanship out of it as they could as I understood it. The old man just drove about the state and let people see Alf Taylor and they elected him. He had a very unsuccessful term of office, That is, the logger he had with the Democratic legislature

and vetoed everything they sent up to him. They overrode his veto.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that when he played horse shoes on the capitol ground?

MR. CHENEY: (Laughter) I remember he was my, what do you call it, major-domo over there under Tom Stewart. Mary Elizabeth was his niece (Governor Taylor's) and she was his secretary when she came to Nashville. She said they used to close up the office. He lived just down the street. She said they used to close up the office and she lived with him and he was a cousin. And they used to close up the office and go down there to dinner in the middle of the day as they say.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was a very quiet time while he was governor.

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was the role of Jim McCord in the campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Jim was always a kind of discreet kind of man. But he worked for Frank. I think he finally came out publicly--yes, I know he did--I don't know what he did, but he did come out publicly for Frank. Let's see I believe he was in Congress then.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you get to travel with Frank Clement any and hear him speak? Did you get to hear any of your speeches given?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, of course I heard the speech in

Gallatin and I heard a few other speeches.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you think of Frank Clement's oratory? What did you think at the time?

I guess that is more important.

MR. CHENEY: Frank was a natural orator. Frank had a natural [ability]. I guess it was natural.

It had to be largely natural, but it may have been educated too. [He had] a sense of rapport with a political crowd. I mean he knew when he had them and when he didn't. He meant to get them. He was like an evangelist on that. He knew practically all the tricks. I saw him doing that kind many times when he had a mixed and even heckling crowd. He'd keep working with them, and working them over and playing it by ear on to an hour and fifteen or twenty minutes till he had them. He'd have them weaving with him before he got through. Now how he did it is still a little miraculous--I don't know. (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: You thought his style was more like an evangelist than a lawyer?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, more of an evangelist than a lawyer.

He had that old--some of those ways--you know, even when he was reading his indictments--of throwing out a tocsin like. (Mr. Cheney gives an example verbally with resonance) "Yes, a million dollar hotel." It was that kind. . . . but it had its effect on the crowd.

DR. CRAWFORD: In other words, it wasn't just the words that you and the other speech writers put

together, but the way he delivered them.

MR. CHENEY:

The way he delivered them very much.

He trained me to put it in there like

he wanted it at times too.

DR. CRAWFORD:

You learned that better as time went on,

I suppose?

MR. CHENEY:

Yes. Then he had that famous conclusion

when he got them weaving with him and he

would raise his hand over his head, "Precious Lord, take my hand, lead us on."

DR. CRAWFORD:

Well, people in Tennessee were mostly

accustomed to evangelistic oratory.

MR. CHENEY:

Yeah. We had a tradition. But he

brought it to new heights then during

that campaign. I remember he made a speech--by G-- I may have that speech in there somewhere, where he said: "They accuse me of wearing my religion on my arm. Yes, I wear my religion, but it's a facsimile of what's in my heart." (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD:

Yes, he was good! Did you help him write that?

MR. CHENEY:

No, I think that was his.

DR. CRAWFORD:

What was the best speech you ever heard him give? Do you remember?

MR. CHENEY:

Well, the greatest speech he ever gave

was partly the circumstances, in my opinion,

the speech he gave to the Legislature. It was after the Supreme

Court ruled on desegregation and we came in that fall and there was a great move on to take the Legislature away. Frank was a moderate, you know. There was a move on to take the Legislature away from him and all these, what do you call them, these Citizens Councils and some Ku Klux's. Now the gallery was organized and there was a lot of hostility in the Legislature. It was a calming speech. It was not a ranting speech. His law partner wrote the speech. I envy him. That's the greatest speech that Frank ever gave and had more effect.

DR. CRAWFORD: About when would that have been? That would have been after the 1954 decision?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Perhaps '55. We got in there right quick. We had some good help in that and organized the Legislature right quick with a program to keep it from being organized against us, and he kept control of the Legislature.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was he trying to do--follow a moderate line?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. Something like the North Carolina-- what was that called--we followed some- what that model. It had to do with some flexibility--entrance of some school children--you could move over from one school to another or something like that under the guise of anything except discrimination--racial discrimination. That was kind of a compromise step.

DR. CRAWFORD: At that time certainly.

MR. CHENEY: I think I have a copy of that speech.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you write that one? No, his law partner did?

MR. CHENEY: No, his law partner did and I can't think of his name now. He was an office lawyer. A bright fellow and he had the right nomenclature to handle it. Frank won them over and carried the vote.

DR. CRAWFORD: The Legislature?

MR. CHENEY: Yes sir. I saw them cry. They were so mad. He was a powerful speaker.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why was he so persuasive with the Legislature?

MR. CHENEY: Well, he

DR. CRAWFORD: You know apparently he could get them to raise taxes and be glad they were doing it.

MR. CHENEY: Well, he always prepared his ground pretty well with them seeing the right men ahead of time and so forth. Well, his political intuition was very great.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were you at headquarters on election night?

MR. CHENEY: I can't remember it distinctly. I'm sure I was.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was it quite a celebration?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. We were young and pretty enthusiastic and pretty confident that we were going to win.

DR. CRAWFORD: Had the press generally started believing you would win too?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, we had good press by that time. I can't remember any instance of that night at the moment.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did Browning react to Clement's charges against him?

MR. CHENEY: Outrage! You know he came back and reran the race two years later. The old man defended himself. He was ever more ineffectual at that time than he was the first time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did his counterattack not succeed?

MR. CHENEY: Frank had too much damn evidence on him.

And it had gotten around, and it does get around that everything on the hill was for sale and had a price. And the man to see was, oh what was his name, I knew him. He had been to school, Vanderbilt, with me. He was a law student.

DR. CRAWFORD: What position did he hold?

MR. CHENEY: He was a lawyer, and he was a friend. But he was the man whom you had to see if you wanted to deal with the state and he collected.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he sort of the bag man?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, the bag man. It's terrible I can't think what his name was---the man to see.

He came from West Tennessee, one of those rural counties and I'll think of it. This had gotten so barefaced. You see Browning had done himself no good in some of it. It was still there--the county

unit plan--was still in the memory of some. The name of it was corruption. It depends on how many people believe you are corrupt, you know.

DR. CRAWFORD: How active a part did Crump take in. . .

MR. CHENEY: Frank's campaign?

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh.

MR. CHENEY: In Memphis, but he didn't move over the state much. This was toward the end for him. (Crump)

DR. CRAWFORD: He died in '54.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, Roxie was already gone. He had a young attorney general down there and he was sort of active. I can't remember his name. A nice fellow. I used to have a good bit of traffic with him.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was not Francis Andrews, was it?

MR. CHENEY: No, I remember him too. I didn't know him so well.

DR. CRAWFORD: Would this one have been named Canale?

MR. CHENEY: I knew Canale too. But this was not Canale. Canale was in the Legislature. And this one may have been too. Of course, there was Willie Gerber, but it wasn't Willie.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, Lon, what about appointing the cabinet? How did Frank Clement go about that? What sort of people did he look for?

MR. CHENEY: Well, of course, in Health (Department of Mental Health), he was always getting advice in this. He depended on professional advice. Of course, for

the Department of Health there is sort of an organization about that and Hutchinson, I believe, had been in there a good long time and was highly regarded. Of course, he had some young men like Don from over there in East Tennessee. He, I believe, was put in charge of Veteran's Affairs. There were more young men than there had been. He had a good [man], Gerard Maddox in the Senate, and Jim Bomar in the House. Jim was a younger man and married to an opera singer. Glenn Nicely had been active in East Tennessee in the campaign. He came in as kind of an executive assistant I guess. He created a job for him.

Bill Snodgrass came in then. Bill is a bright boy. He came from over in East Tennessee, I believe. Didn't he have some political connection with U.T. before?

DR. CRAWFORD: I think so in the financial office there.

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How do you think the Clement cabinet compared with early ones you have known of?

MR. CHENEY: They brought in Ed Boling at that time.

I thought he had some bright men at that time. Better than average. He had Sam Whited, and Franklin Pierce was one of those that got into the race there in '52, and he came in.

I remember Jim Crider--one of the younger men that was put into the Veteran's Affairs. Of course, Harold Miller. He was first Planning Commissioner for the city of Nashville and Frank took him in as State

Planning Commission Director. He was a good man.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you think he is retired now?

MR. CHENEY: I haven't seen or heard of him in a long time. I used to see Harold every now and then. I've been out of town so. Oh yes, and another one--Quill Cope. Quill was active in the campaign and he had been County Superintendent. Cope was a good man.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he made Commissioner of Education?

MR. CHENEY: He was made Commissioner of Education, and later became, of course, head of this school down here at Murfreesboro. Where he had trouble--poor Quill--I never could understand what happened to him. He committed suicide.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that when he was at Murfreesboro?

MR. CHENEY: Uh-huh. Or he had resigned as president. And there's old Bill Leech. Of course, he was a young one, but he was tough and a good man and very responsible and honest sort of man. Z.D. Adkins--Z.D. had been in the Legislature some years and a good man too.

DR. CRAWFORD: Had he been on the Public Service Commission?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I tried to help him with his campaign too. I didn't do him any good. As I said before Ruliman came out of a mental health background. I think he had a right outstanding cabinet as a whole.

DR. CRAWFORD: They were young and some stayed in government a long time, you know.

MR. CHENEY: Uh-huh. Bill Parham was kind of a labor pick.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did Parham do?

MR. CHENEY: He was with the Department of Labor. O yes, Jim (Cousin Jim McCord) came in as Commissioner of Conservation. Keith Hampton was sort of controversial. Keith was a good man, but not too smart. And of course, Donald McSween. Donald sort of fancied himself. I think Donald was bright and able enough. There was the one and only Hilton Butler and he was Commissioner of Safety at that time. Butler was one of the smartest men in the government at that time. Smart in politics, and he knew administration for that matter.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, he was one of the few with some background at that time?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he wasn't young. Hutchinson had already been in there. Northington I remember him too. He was born up here at Clarksville.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who's that?

MR. CHENEY: He was head of Insurance. I think Frank had reason to take pride in his cabinet. I think they were up to snuff and some of them were outstanding.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he hold regular cabinet meetings?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I don't know how regular, yes.

THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY.
THIS PROJECT IS "RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY". THE DATE IS
DECEMBER 12, 1981. THE PLACE IS SMYRNA, TENNESSEE. THE INTERVIEW IS
WITH MR. BRAINARD CHENEY. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD,
DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE.
THE TRANSCRIPTION IS BY BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEW # IX.

DR. CRAWFORD: What about relations with his [Frank Clement]
cabinet?

MR. CHENEY: I said he worked closely with his legislative
leaders too. He was always considerate of his
cabinet men. He never ran over their heads. He was a man that would
never do that anyhow--go over their heads, you know, without due regard
for them and their position.

DR. CRAWFORD: Which one were most influential in his cabinet?
Usually a few people stand out.

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I thought Bill Leech, Highway Commissioner,
was pretty outstanding. Of course, Bill came
from Dickson County and had the County Judge down there--close to Clement
[Judge Robert Clement]. And he was smart and experienced. I guess Donald
(name keeps evading me) [and he] had a personal relationship. They were
both young men. He liked Don and I had regard for his judgment and polit-
ical know-how. I think it was Bill Leech that most of his family wanted
him to pick to succeed himself.

DR. CRAWFORD: Rather than Ellington?

MR. CHENEY: Rather than Ellington, yeah.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was Ellington influential in cabinet meetings?

MR. CHENEY: Well, Frank always had high regard for Buford's judgment--political judgment. He had considerable regard for old Joe. He had to water Joe down.

DR. CRAWFORD: Which Joe?

MR. CHENEY: Joe Henry. But Joe was imaginative and rough
and tough and somebody described Joe [as] "he'll
run under you." (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: He'll run under you?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. He'll run over you or run under you or both. Of course, Frank was close to Eddie, but that broke up early in the first administration.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was the nature of that break-up?

MR. CHENEY: I am trying to reconstruct that. It seemed to have a connection . . . There was a question of giving an automobile to Clement--a Cadillac. Whether he paid for it or not [became the question].

DR. CRAWFORD: You mean the state provided him one.

MR. CHENEY: Friends providing it--this was the thing.

Frank sort of painted himself in a corner, and he bought it himself.

DR. CRAWFORD: And Fryer seemed to break with him over that?

MR. CHENEY: It grew out of that somehow. They. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Does that seem to you to be adequate cause for a break like that.

MR. CHENEY: No, that wasn't the cause, but that came into it.

The cause was that Frank began to call in his father and take his father's advice as against Creighton and Eddie and this woman. He ignored them and ditched some of their decisions. I can't get my hand on it now as to what pretext or specific thing.

DR. CRAWFORD: But their advice was basically different from that of his father's.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, and they wanted Frank to throw his father out. That was what it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was asking quite a lot!

MR. CHENEY: Yes. They were fools. Keep the old man away from the capital, you see. Well, Frank wasn't about to do that! And it was in the course of that later when they broke with him, they began talk about this automobile. They said that they raised money for it and something like that and Frank said he bought it. His word came under question. Anyhow, I remember he went far enough to report his savings accounts to show that he did have some money and could have paid for it. But he was a bit under and of course, it was a silly thing. People had been giving governors cars for generations. It wasn't an unusual thing to do---friends of the campaign or whatnot.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh.

MR. CHENEY: Frank sort of got himself in a crack on that.

Anyhow, it didn't. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: That was not the cause of the break then that they made public?

MR. CHENEY: No. They were squealing on him as it were, after he had broken with them.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, was it more than anything a matter of power or influence over the governor?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, that is what it was. And who was trying to tell Frank what to do. And he was taking his father's advice and not theirs. That was the real issue.

DR. CRAWFORD: That seems more reasonable. Do you remember any issues that they disagreed with his father on?

MR. CHENEY: If I thought about it long enough it might come back to me. I have known. You see I wasn't close to it. I didn't attempt to advise Frank on such matters. I didn't sit in on any of the. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you do after the campaign, Mr. Cheney?

MR. CHENEY: I wrote speeches.

DR. CRAWFORD: Still wrote speeches?

MR. CHENEY: It took a lot of speeches. Frank did a lot of speaking.

DR. CRAWFORD: He certainly did, you know.

MR. CHENEY: And I sort of would hang out--I had an office over there--in McCord's conservation department.

They had a Bureau of Information and Advertising--state advertising and so forth. And I got a fellow named--an old newspaperman who had been over there with the state sometime--he had been with Browning Administration. But I liked him and he was essentially a newspaperman. He had been managing editor of the Tennessean way back under Luke Lea and later had been the Universal News Service Correspondent for many years.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember his name?

MR. CHENEY: It will come to me in a minute. He had established the information bureau and knew all about it. Frank put him in to do the work and I just sort of mused around in and worked with him and did some things. Mainly, I wrote speeches and statements.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you hear the governor make any of those speeches? Did you travel with him?

MR. CHENEY: Sometimes yes, frequently. Openly, sometimes. I remember him addressing the American Library Association Convention. I went along and he said--and he did this sort of ostentatiously. I was embarrassed--"I have here the man who wrote this speech." (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: Well that was appropriate in your case.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I frequently went with him. He made a tour out in the Northwest to make TVA speeches. TVA was a pet of mine. I stayed close with those men and visited them in Knoxville and mused around with them some. We also had a lobby that was

called "Citizens for TVA".

DR. CRAWFORD: Jennings Perry's group.

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I got Jennings that job. Jennings had been on the other side, but Jennings was a good man for it. I ran the gauntlet for him. Partly, he was my friend and partly I knew he was the man for the job. He was outstanding as the man for the job and did a d--- good job every year. The state helped to support it and there were two or three states--Alabama, Mississippi--that put in money behind that. Government's lobby. That's what it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: I have interviewed Mr. Perry about that.

MR. CHENEY: Well, Jennings ran it for years.

DR. CRAWFORD: Seemed very effective.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he was very talented and a journalist and knew his politics.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you worked on the TVA content of the speeches too?

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What other duties did you have during the Clement period?

MR. CHENEY: That was about it. I did some and wrote a little bit for the state magazine over there in the conservation department.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were you working full-time or part-time then?

MR. CHENEY: Well, part-time, but theoretically half-time.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were paid for half-time?

MR. CHENEY: I never did get much money from the state.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you wanted to be free to do some of your own work?

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you divide your time? Did you spend a part of each day there?

MR. CHENEY: Well, I tried various ways. (Laughter) None of them worked. I wound up spending time there day and night! Of course, I had two assistants. Roque Fajardo was the first one I took in.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was that?

MR. CHENEY: A boy whom I had known. He was on one of the television stations as a newsman.

DR. CRAWFORD: Roque Fajardo?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. He was a bright boy. He helped write speeches and statements. Statements to go into it. Sometimes for other cabinet members we did some speeches. Though there were cabinet men who had their own publicity men, some we did speeches for.

DR. CRAWFORD: Which cabinet men did the most speaking?

MR. CHENEY: Let's see. I don't know if I can say.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did any of them stand out as good speakers for the administration?

MR. CHENEY: I think Bill Leech was an effective speaker for the administration. I think Donald McSween.

It's terrible to be old. Sam Whited was one of them. Joe Henry made speeches, and he was quite a speaker. Eddie [Friar] in the early days.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did Eddie Friar have ambitions of his own?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I think he had dreams. I think he thought he might succeed the governorship.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suppose it isn't unusual for a cabinet member to look ahead toward that sort of thing.

MR. CHENEY: No. And a good many governors have come out that way--Hill McAlister.

DR. CRAWFORD: How long did you work for the Clement Administration?

MR. CHENEY: Well I was there until--Jim McCord was a famous speaker--I was there until soon after Buford Ellington opened his campaign.

DR. CRAWFORD: That would have been in '58.

MR. CHENEY: In '58 along about say June. It came about. . .
(Did I tell you this story?)

DR. CRAWFORD: No.

MR. CHENEY: Well, I already had sent the word out that I wasn't going to stay with Buford when Frank got through. When Frank got through I was going to be through. I didn't like Buford. It wasn't anything personal. He was a cold-blooded fish,

and money politician.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you mean by "money politician"?

MR. CHENEY: Took it! Took it, yes! I'll tell you more about Buford in a little bit because it comes in this way. It so happened that I had an assistant and he was very close to Frank because they were about the same age. Frank took him on his tour of South America. What was that boy's name! I got a letter from his wife after he died. He became connected with a college down . . . Tom Anderson.

DR. CRAWFORD: Tom--what was the name?

MR. CHENEY: Tom Anderson. Anyhow, he was the son of a preacher--Presbyterian preacher. I did the TVA section for the speech. We hadn't been drawn into the speech. We hadn't tried to. He came in and dropped the speech on my desk--copies of it. That was the first time we had seen it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who brought the speech in?

MR. CHENEY: This boy, my assistant, had picked them up at the governor's office, I reckon that was where. Anyhow, maybe at Buford's headquarters. He had already opened headquarters. Then he began thumbing through it. And he said, "Listen to this!" and read it out. Well it was a complicated piece of indirection. But we both appreciated it immediately. This was a gesture to the Ku Klux Klan--playing footsie with them. What it said in effect was, (it is hard to recover a thing like that, it is in the texture of the situation.)

"I will close down the school before I will let it be (I can't give you the wording, but) menaced by Ku Klux Klan." It was an indirect way of closing down the schools.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did that sort of invite the Ku Klux Klan to do it? Was that a Buford Ellington campaign speech?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah. Well it is an ironic story. Well, I--we both--immediately reacted to it, but then we were speech writers. I said then, "Is this real!" I thought about it awhile and I didn't want to think too much about it. I had, it so happened, to make a trip to Chattanooga for something that Frank was sending me to do. I ran many errands for him that wasn't administrative. Anyhow, I knew the head of the Ku Klux Klan down there. I got with him, and he hadn't seen it. He didn't know about it. He caught on. I can see what could be done with this. Then there was a Ku Kluxer in Nashville who was sort of a d--- fool and a publicity hound. He confirmed it and he would use it himself. It was in there so I just sent Frank a note and I said, "Frank, I don't have to be a party to do this kind of thing and I am not going to be party to it. I don't know if you had anything personally to do with this, but you could take some responsibility. I'm just going to bow out."

DR. CRAWFORD: Of the Ellington campaign?

MR. CHENEY: Out of Frank's cabinet, I mean out of his administration. I said, "I'm not . . .

you put your hand on this man's shoulder and I am not going to have anything to do with him." I don't want to get personal about it, but at that



time I had joined the Catholic Church some years before--half-dozen years before. I had become aware of a monastery and I had been up on a retreat to one at Bardstown called Gethsemane, a little settlement. There was an abbot whom I had a great admiration for and believed in and I went up there and talked to him about it. He was pretty exacting. Of course, the thing for me to do in the game of politics was to blast, to come out with a public statement, and blast Ellington about it and sideswipe Frank Clement.

DR. CRAWFORD: It would have been a criticism of Clement too, wouldn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. He said, "Clement is both your political and your personal friend."

I said, "Yes, he is." (Laughter)

He said, "You can't do it." (Laughter) So I didn't. I came back and kept my mouth shut.

DR. CRAWFORD: You just left the administration at that point.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I just left it. I will say that I tried to euchre through friends over at the Tennessean to do something about it. But peculiarly this is a newspaper ploy--it was the thing to do--to catch this man here in Nashville--the Ku Kluxer leader--who to get his name and face in the paper would do anything and get him to exploit this thing. [In other words] to pick it out of this speech and tell them what they were going to do about it. Well, the Tennessean was scared of me, you know, they wouldn't have--I smelled.

They wouldn't touch it. They were superstitious because I had come out from Clement. They couldn't believe that, I didn't go to them directly, I had an intermediary. As a matter of fact, Herbert Bingham was my intermediary.

DR. CRAWFORD: With the Tennessee Municipal League?

MR. CHENEY: No, the Tennessean newspaper. You see, I was trying to plant a story in the Tennessean by in-direction.

DR. CRAWFORD: But wasn't Bingham with the Municipal League or something?

MR. CHENEY: Oh yes, Bingham was. We were just personal and political friends. I was very close to him.

As a matter of fact, Herbert had a lot to do with my coming down in the first place to get in the Clement administration, along with Hilton Butler. Anyhow, they screwed it up and did exactly what I told them not to do and helped to defeat the man who was running against Buford Ellington. I won't go into that because it was out of clumsiness and clubfootedness, and suspicion of me, I suppose. Anyhow, that is when I got out. Frank didn't like it; he got over it. They sent a couple of patrolmen out here and I was reading copy on a novel. They sent the patrolmen out here to persuade me to come in and talk to him. I wouldn't go. There wasn't anything to be gained by that.

DR. CRAWFORD: To talk to Frank Clement?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. I had made my decision. I saw Frank some-

time later. We got on good terms. I told him I didn't have any use for Buford and I didn't make any apologies about it. I think . . . I never saw him because it was not long You know, Buford in one of his early actions, put the knife in Frank's back.

DR. CRAWFORD: I was going to say that I think later that Frank Clement sort of revised his opinion. How did Ellington turn against him after he was in office?

MR. CHENEY: All right, the deal was this: And I got it from the man that carried it out and I got it straight. Rudy Olgiati told me this. Rudy Olgiati was very close to Estes Kefauver--politically and every way. He was mayor of the town there at Chattanooga.

DR. CRAWFORD: And he ran for governor.

MR. CHENEY: He ran for governor and I was his speech writer and that was my last appearance.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now what campaign was that in?

MR. CHENEY: It would have been in '62 I guess. Estes Kefauver was afraid of Frank.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was afraid he was going to run against him?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. At sixty, no. The Tennessean was very much for Estes. Made the proposition to the

Tennessean: If the Tennessean would lay off of Buford he would get Buford to block Frank Clement from coming out in the senatorial race. The way this came about was: all right, what had sort of succeeded by

that time the Crump Machine--but old man Crump was dead-- it wasn't at all the same operation, but he was the central point of power. Hub Walters over at Morristown was the--the title may have been secretary or president or something of the Roadbuilders Association. And this association actually passed on who built the roads. He had to have the governor in his pocket, but he could say who could get the contracts and who didn't. This is what it amounted to.

DR. CRAWFORD: And there were a limited number.

MR. CHENEY: And they had to be licensed, you see.

And only these who were licensed could build roads in Tennessee. He was the man who did it. It went through his funnel, but it was a game between the governor and Hub (Walters). So Hub and Buford--but Buford didn't have to speak up--Hub was the man who said, "No, Frank, you can't run."

DR. CRAWFORD: That they would not give support?

MR. CHENEY: Hub was also the money bags for the administration. Hub, of course, was a rich man himself.

But then he was a great handler of money. So he took Frank out of the race. I know that happened. I watched it. Rudy was the man who carried it out. The Tennessean was at first objective about his new administration. Finally came out editorially supporting him before this first term was over with.

DR. CRAWFORD: After they had blocked Clement's running against Kefauver. Well, the Tennessean was very support-

ive of Kefauver.

MR. CHENEY: Sure. And the only opposition that Estes had was that fellow who is still alive down there-- Judge Andrew Jackson Taylor down there in West Tennessee.

DR. CRAWFORD: Tip Taylor?

MR. CHENEY: Tip Taylor. What was that boy's name?

DR. CRAWFORD: Tip Taylor. Tip Taylor made the race, but Tip wasn't anything for Estes to be concerned about really.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now the account was that Ellington and Hub Walters told Frank Clement that he would not have support if he ran against Kefauver in '60? That was a real disappointment to him wasn't it?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I think it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did his drinking problem get worse after that?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, I never talked to Frank about it. Yes, it came out in ways like that. There's a little bit more about this--corroborated. [There was] some talk about LBJ--Johnson's influence with Kefauver. Kefauver was due to be the presidential candidate the next time--really. He was an outstanding man and so far as [popularity was concerned], he ran that famous race in '52 where he made his name. Then in '62 he had had . . . Crump had a hand in this. Crump and Frank Clement got control of the Tennessee Delegation against Estes and gave him trouble over there and embarrassed him. For a time they

couldn't quite euchre Frank into a vice presidential pitch. The junior senator. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Gore?

MR. CHENEY: Gore.

DR. CRAWFORD: They brought his name up?

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, and had a long deadlock over it. Estes did get the vice presidential nomination for what it was worth. He should have been the presidential nominee the next go around, but he withdrew himself. I don't understand what happened altogether there, but Johnson had a hand in it. Of course, Buford Ellington was the man who kept Frank out of the race and reassured Estes of his re-election. Johnson repaid Ellington later with a job in Washington, as you remember an important job.

DR. CRAWFORD: Director of Mobilization or something like that.

MR. CHENEY: All right. I just wanted to point that out.

That was when I got out.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were out of the picture by then. What did you do?

MR. CHENEY: I was working on a political novel that I hadn't been able to succeed with. As a matter of fact, it was a philosophical and political novel under the title of "Pursuit of Happiness" that Crown announced for publication--Crown Publishers. And then they had a shake-up. The management---the young turks took over---the nephew of the president. The old man retired and as a result they snatch-

ed about four novels I believe, one of mine and two other southern writers, and kicked out our editor. The boy lives here now.

DR. CRAWFORD: The novel did not get published?

MR. CHENEY: It did not get published.

DR. CRAWFORD: Have you ever submitted it to another publisher?

MR. CHENEY: Oh yes, I submitted it at the time. They kick them back now. The market has greatly changed in my lifetime. Used to, you always got a report or reading or so forth and frequently if editors saw something in your novel they'd like to work with you to bring it out, but now you mostly get a d--- formal kickback. They're decent enough to write it but this does not mean so forth and so forth. I got one letter out of this. That was a boy I had known. Well, he was Malcolm Calley's son, Rob. Rob wrote me a personal letter about it. It was great in so many ways, and so forth but it was so d--- complicated that he had trouble following it. Frankly, he didn't know what it meant when he got [to the end]. I think it was probably a fair criticism. I took a little too much professional attitude to it--politics. It made it have limited readership.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, you weren't on the scene at the time, but two years later, in 1962, Clement ran again. Do you know anything about the relationship between Ellington and Clement at that time?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, they were friendly. Of course, I was on the other side writing for Olgiati. Olgiati had the

worst campaign any man ever had. Frank had a good, well-organized campaign and he was on the inside with it. I guess he had swallowed his pride and they (he and Buford) were on good relations, at least good political relations.

[Olgiati's] was the worst organized campaign that I had to do with. It looked like all the breaks. . I don't want to get into this; it is a sad story, but young Silliman Evans died suddenly. I had a friendly relationship with young Silliman. I sort of liked him. We had been on a board together. Anyhow, Amon had come on and Amon had backed John J. Hooker in a shake-up and old Olgiati had shouldered him out. Amon was mad and didn't like it and we couldn't deal with him. Here would have been the bower of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. We had to depend on him and he went so far as to support a man from Memphis who was a conservative that didn't support anything the Tennessean had ever been for.

DR. CRAWFORD: Bill Farris.

MR. CHENEY: Bill Farris--yes. We tried, but we couldn't deal with him directly because of my taint from being a "Banner" man and we did everything we could and things began to break wrong for us. The man we wanted for campaign manager was coy and wouldn't come in because he wanted the promise of a judgeship out of Estes. And Estes wouldn't give it to him, and I didn't blame him. He was a lawyer over there in West Tennessee and his name I can't remember for personal reasons because I believe he sold us out.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he from Memphis?

MR. CHENEY: No, he wasn't from Memphis. He was from one of those counties over there in those bottoms. He was a lawyer and I think he was an intelligent man, even too intelligent to have done this by lack of sense. First, we got kind of a Rotarian from Chattanooga, a boy who had no real acquaintance with state politics. Jewish--a nice fellow--well intentioned, but just a blupper. We began to get cries from politicians from over the state and from Kefauver to get that fool out of there, you know. This is a bad thing to do, you know.

DR. CRAWFORD: To change campaign manager?

MR. CHENEY: Yes. They put on me! So I had to get Rudy and say, "Rudy, he is going to destroy us." Rudy didn't want to do it so Rudy kicked him up and made him visiting or peripatetic manager to get him out of the way. And then we got this man who we'd been trying to get and he knifed us!! The s-- of a b-----. I can't prove it, but I think he did it through Amon Evans. He was Amon Evans' man, not our man.

Here's what happened. The name of the late head of the Teamster's Union was . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Hoffa.

MR. CHENEY: Hoffa was a dirty word at the Tennessean and they were violently anti-Hoffa. They had a campaign about it and anybody close to Hoffa. Well, it was one of Hoffa's men in Memphis, one of his labor leaders in Memphis. There was some clumsy oaf

down there was taking Rudy around and took him in to meet this man and before Rudy could do anything about it they made his picture with this man and it appeared in the paper here. This was poison with the Tennessean and I knew it, as soon as I saw it. I told Rudy that he was going to have to make a statement and clear his skirts. He didn't want to do it. He was an old union man, carrying a card in his pocket.

(Laughter) I bet I wrote half a dozen statements for him and he'd put it in his pocket and he'd say, "I know I have got to do it." And then he wouldn't do it. So after this one of the early acts as a new manager came in and I didn't have much traffic with him. And there wasn't anything between us, but I think he was sort of officious. Without consulting me, and I was supposed to be head of publicity, or my assistant, who was a boy that Kefauver put down there--a law student, a good boy. As a matter of fact, this boy came to me with it. He (the campaign manager) issued a statement without consulting Rudy on the road or telling him anything about it, he issued a statement something on the order that I talked about and the newspaper clique with Rudy said, "What in the h--- are you doing to us, Rudy?"

[Rudy said,] "I'm not doing anything!"

They said, "Well, look at this!"

He said, "H---, I didn't say it, not a word of it."

Here we were. My official [report] of it was: This boy hadn't consulted me hadn't told me about it nor my assistant. I sent word in there. That s-- of a b---- was knifing us. This was our newly appointed manager.

DR. CRAWFORD: The lawyer from West Tennessee?

MR. CHENEY: The lawyer from West Tennessee and I can't think of his name. His name won't stay with me because I feel so bad about him. I said, "Look, we've been . . . and they are ruining this man and did! The Tennessean went out in spite of this and came out for Bill Farris. Well, I didn't mean to get into all this, but what I was trying to get a hold of--I knew that the Federal Highway Department issued an unfavorable report on Buford's highway practices.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did it have to do with buying land?

MR. CHENEY: I never could get a glimpse of it. I tried to run it down and I had a few helpers over there. I spent thirty days everywhere I could think of to try to pry it out or a copy of it. Or I'd get somebody to make a copy of it and I'd pay him for it, but I never could get my hands on it. Frank had too many friends over there and he had a d--- well organized campaign. I knew we weren't making any headway. If I could have blown that thing, we might have had a chance at one point and we could have kept the wobbly Tennessean. But I knew I had sat around there for ten days knowing that we were beat, beat, beat and there was not a thing we could do about it. It's a miserable feeling. It makes you feel low and dumb and there just wasn't a thing we could do. We'd been ruined and wrecked. He was a good man and I hated it. Rudy was sort of a crude fellow, but able. I showed up pretty bad in his eyes cause he didn't know quite what had happened to him. I don't know what he thought this man was doing to him. He was out on the road and I never



tried to tell him.

DR. CRAWFORD: He might never have known what happened to him?

MR. CHENEY: Yes, he might never have. I mean why this man would have done such a thing.

DR. CRAWFORD: Got him photographed with a lawyer who was close to Hoffa?

MR. CHENEY: Well that and giving this statement out without consulting him and so that Rudy would publicly deny it and so forth. There is no man that stupid who would be in charge of a campaign to issue a statement for his candidate without notifying his candidate about it deliberately. I sort of faded on it. I'd decided I'd quit politics.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did this report ever become known later?

MR. CHENEY: You mean about the manager who issued it?

DR. CRAWFORD: No, about the highway report.

MR. CHENEY: Yes, it did.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was it critical of Buford Ellington's purchase of land at highway intersections?

MR. CHENEY: It's a long time now and I never read the report. I think so. It was critical of Buford. My general impression was it was pretty much dynamite. It was quite critical of Buford. But I don't now have it in mind. I never read the report. I know I never saw it. What got into the papers I saw.

DR. CRAWFORD: How were relation between Clement and Ellington

after Clement was elected again in '62?

MR. CHENEY:

I wondered. I never had any more conferences with Frank. I often wondered how Frank felt

about his friend, Buford Ellington.

DR. CRAWFORD:

I've heard that relations were not good, but I don't know any details.

MR. CHENEY:

Well, Frank was essentially an honest man.

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